

NEW YORK (AP) — One of the longest-running television series, "Seinfeld," showed its final episode to an estimated 40 million people. The show, which premiered in 1989, was the most-watched television series in the preceding week. The show's popularity is reflected in the fact that it is the most-watched American television series on the air.

Travolta admits debt to Cannes

CANNES (AP) — Michael Jackson's performance at the Cannes Film Festival was a major disappointment. The singer, who had been expected to perform, did not appear. The festival organizers said that Jackson's performance was "disappointing" and that they were "disappointed" that he did not perform.

George Michael pleads no contest in conduct case

LOS ANGELES (AP) — George Michael, the British singer, has pleaded no contest to a charge of sexual misconduct. The charge was brought by a woman who claimed that Michael had sexually abused her. Michael's lawyer said that his client was "genuinely remorseful" and that he was "pleading no contest" to the charge.

Curry is not a...

LOS ANGELES (AP) — The Los Angeles Lakers have signed a new contract with their star player, Magic Johnson. The contract is worth \$10 million per year and is the highest in the league. Johnson, who has been with the Lakers since 1979, is expected to play for the team for several more years.

bowie's Swiss castle up for sale

NEW YORK (AP) — David Bowie's Swiss castle is up for sale. The castle, which is located in the Swiss Alps, is a 19th-century building that has been converted into a modern residence. Bowie, who has lived in the castle for several years, is looking for a new home and is willing to sell the castle for a price of \$10 million.

Odeh, Fayeze appointed to Senate

AMMAN (Petra) — A Royal Decree was issued on Saturday appointing Adnan Abu Odeh and Sami Al Fayeze as members of the Upper House of Parliament as of May 16, 1998.

Jordan Times

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Price: Jordan 200 fils

Puzzled by Netanyahu's contradictory statements King: Without people's peace security can never be a reality

Cotti: Swiss understand Jordan's short-term pessimism

By Francesca Ciriaci
Jordan Times Staff Reporter

AMMAN — His Majesty King Hussein on Saturday criticized the Israeli premier as inconsistent in his statements regarding the peace process and urged the Jewish state to abandon its "fortress mentality."

King Hussein also expressed regret over Thursday's killing of nine Palestinians by Israeli soldiers during clashes in Gaza.

"It is a sign of despair," he said of the violence sparked in the Palestinian self-rule areas on the 50th anniversary of the "nakbeh" (catastrophe) — the 1948 war which resulted in the establishment of the state of Israel on parts of British-mandate Palestine.

Voicing Jordan's increasing frustration with the intransigent policies of the Likud-led government of Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu, the King said he had been "rather puzzled" by recent "contradictory statements" by the Israeli premier.

"In one interview he was suggesting that peace should be between governments and not people. I have never heard of any peace that is meaningful that is not between people as well," the King told a joint press conference with visiting Swiss President Flavio Cotti.

"Yet he contradicts himself in a later statement by saying that peace between governments is just pieces of papers that have no meaning, and that security is an essential part," the King said.

Mr. Netanyahu, currently in the U.S. for high-level talks on the stalled peace process, has been trying to justify his refusal to carry out long overdue troop redeployments from the West Bank.

He has repeatedly said that a U.S. proposal for an Israeli withdrawal from a further 13.1 per cent of the West Bank exposed Israel to unacceptable security



His Majesty King Hussein and Swiss President Flavio Cotti shake hands in Amman Saturday (Photo by Youssef 'Allan)

risks.

But "without peace and without the overwhelming majority of people that believe in peace defending it, working for it, believing in it, security can never really be a reality," the King said.

Slamming Israel's rebuffing Washington's latest attempt to salvage the peace process, the King said "the U.S. was invited as a partner to make peace... and cannot be regarded as a messenger, but it has the right to offer its ideas and thoughts."

"Our Palestinian brethren have accepted these ideas and thoughts fully. There is a problem now with the Israeli government, apparently," the King said.

"We will wait and see how things develop, but I hope we will move away from Israel being a fortress and Israelis being forced to live in a fortress with a fortress mentality," he

Mr. Cotti, on the second leg of a four-day Mideast tour which took him to Gaza for talks with Palestinian President Yasser Arafat on Friday.

At the bilateral level, King Hussein and Mr. Cotti hailed the friendly relations between Amman and Bern.

Later on Saturday, His Royal Highness Crown Prince Hassan and the Swiss president discussed means to activate economic cooperation and enhance interaction between the private sectors of the two countries.

The Crown Prince reviewed Jordan's efforts to encourage regional cooperation and build peace and stability, referring to the call for establishing a regional conflict resolution centre on the basis of a code of conduct to which all concerned countries would subscribe.

The Swiss president, accompanied by a delegation of parliamentarians and businesspersons, is scheduled to start a two-day visit to the Jewish state today for talks with his Israeli counterpart, Ezer Weizmann.

Following are excerpts from His Majesty King Hussein's address at a dinner banquet in honour of the Swiss president, Saturday:

Your Excellency,

I would like to seize this opportunity on behalf of the people and government of Jordan to welcome you on this visit to Jordan which delighted us. It has brought alive the many contacts between our peoples at all levels and in all times. And it has also given us the opportunity to discuss the current situation in the region regarding the dream to which we are committed, that is a comprehensive peace and putting an end to the obstacles that appear in its way. They are serious now, more than they ever

(Continued on page 7)

King, Arafat discuss latest violence, U.S. peace efforts Violence is expression of despair — King

By Tareq Ayyoub
Special to the Jordan Times

AMMAN — His Majesty King Hussein and Palestinian President Yasser Arafat on Saturday discussed the latest outbreak of Middle East violence and Israel's refusal to make a further troop withdrawal from 13.1 per cent of the West Bank.

Palestinian ambassador to Jordan, Omar Khatib, said both leaders discussed the 14-month deadlock in Middle East peace-making during a one-hour meeting in Amman. The King and President Arafat are worried that further tension could destabilise the region, he added.

His Royal Highness Crown Prince Hassan, Royal Court Chief Fayeze Tarawneh and Prime Minister Abdul Salam Majali also attended the meeting.

Hours earlier, Foreign Minister Jawad Anani delivered a verbal message from King Hussein to Egyptian President Hosni Mubarak on ways to restart the peace process.

King Hussein and Mr. Arafat also evaluated U.S. efforts to bring peace talks between the Palestinians and Israelis back on track, added Mr. Khatib.

"President Arafat briefed His Majesty on the confrontation between angry Palestinians and the Israeli army in different parts of the self-rule areas," Mr. Khatib told the Jordan Times.

Palestinian frustration boiled over onto the streets on Thursday when hundreds of thousands of people marked the nakbeh, or "catastrophe" — the term Arabs use in describing the 1948 war that led to Israel's creation and the expulsion of many Palestinians from their homes and villages.

Thursday's unrest was the bloodiest in the West Bank and the Gaza Strip in almost two years. Israeli troops shot dead nine Palestinians, according to the Palestinian National Authority. Independent sources have placed the death toll at five.

The deadlock in talks has fuelled decades of frustrated Palestinian efforts to regain occupied Arab land and achieve effective self-rule.

Jordan condemned the violence and held Israel responsible for the consequences.

Prior to his meeting with Mr. Arafat, the King told reporters that the recent violence was a reaction to "despair" among the Palestinians.

"It is very regrettable that



His Majesty King Hussein and His Royal Highness Crown Prince Hassan welcome Palestinian President Yasser Arafat in Amman, Saturday (Photo by Youssef 'Allan)

3 Palestinians injured in Hebron clashes, 18 arrested in Jerusalem

HEBRON (Agencies) — Israeli soldiers hit three Palestinian stone-throwers with rubber-coated metal bullets during clashes in the tense West Bank city of Hebron on Saturday, witnesses said.

The clashes started when dozens of Palestinian and Jewish settlers threw stones at each other near a Jewish enclave in the heart of the divided city.

Israeli soldiers moved in hoping to act as a buffer. The Palestinians then began throwing rocks and petrol bombs at the soldiers, who initially responded with percussion grenades but later fired rubber-coated metal bullets.

Hebron has traditionally been a flashpoint of violence. About 400 Jewish settlers live and study in the city centre among more than 100,000 Palestinians.

Palestinian demonstrators also clashed with Israeli police in Arab east Jerusalem on Saturday, and 18 people were arrested, a police spokesman said.

Demonstrators threw stones at a police station, causing troops to respond with rubber-coated bullets. Witnesses said seven Palestinians were injured, some from the bullets and others from blows.

"We dispersed them," said police spokesman Shmuel Ben-Ruby. "They came with the inten-

tion of attacking the police station."

There was no immediate word on the condition of those injured in Hebron and Jerusalem.

A 14-month deadlock in peace-making has tarnished frustration among the Palestinians over decades-long efforts to regain occupied Arab land.

Israel's right-wing Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu has blocked progress on peace moves by refusing an American proposal to transfer a further 13 per cent of West Bank land to Palestinian rule.

Washington insists that Israel must make a second troop withdrawal as a prelude to final peace negotiations.

Palestinian President Yasser Arafat has accepted the American initiative aimed at reviving the peace process.

Meanwhile, eighteen Palestinians were arrested during protests in east Jerusalem on Saturday after a group of them hurled stones at Israeli police and border guards during a demonstration in the Holy City, the police said. Palestinian sources said Israeli police beat three Palestinians as dozens of students threw stones and empty bottles at a police station in Arab east Jerusalem, which the Jewish state occupied and illegally annexed in 1967.

"There is despair among the Palestinian people and any further delay in Israeli redeployment will make Palestinians more and more frustrated and lead them to think of other ways to regain their rights," Mr. Khatib said.

"The adamant stand of the Israeli government will renew violence not only in the Palestinian territories but also in the region as a whole," the ambassador said.

Lebanon dismisses Netanyahu's U.N. statements on withdrawal

BEIRUT (AP) — Lebanon's foreign minister dismissed Saturday Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu's assurances to comply with a U.N. resolution that calls for a withdrawal from southern Lebanon.

Mr. Netanyahu said Friday that he had told U.N. Secretary-General Kofi Annan that Israel was ready to abide by U.N. Security Council Resolution 425 and to withdraw from Lebanon as soon as possible.

"We made it clear that as far as Israel is concerned, we are ready to implement Resolution 425 ... We added no conditions, no requirement for a peace treaty with Lebanon, although we would like one," Mr. Netanyahu said Friday in New York.

Israel's government decided in March to endorse the resolution. But

Netanyahu: We are ready to implement Resolution 425 ... we added no conditions, no requirement for a peace treaty

Israeli Defence Minister Yitzhak Mordechai said he would only pull back troops after he has negotiated security arrangements with the Lebanese government.

"Israel should get out unconditionally and is not entitled to spoils from its invasion and occupation," Lebanese Foreign Minister Faris Bouez told the

Voice of Lebanon radio station.

He ruled out a complete Israeli withdrawal, saying Mr. Netanyahu would only stage a partial pullout to quiet critics at home.

"Netanyahu doesn't believe in a thing called peace," Mr. Bouez said.

Israel wants the Lebanese army to disarm the Shiite Muslim Hizbollah guerrilla group and to deploy its troops throughout southern Lebanon. Lebanon has rejected the proposal, saying it wants Israel to leave without conditions.

Syria, the main power in Lebanon, has also rejected the offer, saying Israel's withdrawal should not be negotiated separately from an agreement on the return of the Golan Heights, occupied in 1967.



The Rose City's Siq restored

Her Majesty Queen Noor and Swiss President Flavio Cotti inaugurate new restorations of Petra's siq (entrance) Saturday. His Royal Highness Prince Ra'ed and Minister of Tourism Akel Biltaji watch as the Queen cuts the ribbon (see story on page 3) (Petra photo)

Syria denounces 'Gaza massacre,' calls on U.S. to punish Israel

DAMASCUS (AFP) — Official Syrian media on Saturday denounced "the massacre in Gaza" which left nine Palestinians dead and called on Washington to punish Israel.

"By the massacre in Gaza, Israel once again showed its true aggressive, racist and terrorist face and its hostility to peace," the daily Tishrin wrote.

"What happened Thursday in Gaza proved the hostility of Israeli leaders toward peace," it said, adding that "the [U.N.] Security Council should investigate the crimes and killings by the Israeli government of [Prime Minister] Benjamin Netanyahu."

Nine Palestinians were killed by Israeli soldiers who opened fire on protesters in the Gaza Strip and West Bank marking the 50th anniversary of Al Nakbeh, or "the catastrophe," as Arabs refer to the founding of Israel in 1948.

Tishrin also called on Washington to "assume its responsibilities in the peace process by checking Israel's aggression, by stopping its aid [to the Israeli government], and punishing it if necessary."

Al Thawra newspaper said the Israeli prime minister "is mocking the international community in speaking about peace and making peace in his own way as the United States stands by with its arms crossed, not even asking him to stop the bloodbath in Palestine and Lebanon."

It called on Arabs to adopt "a united position in face of American partiality toward Israel [and] to cease the policy of normalisation with the Jewish state."

Egypt accuses Israel of 'manipulation' over West Bank redeployment offer

CAIRO (AFP) — Egypt accused Israel on Saturday of "unacceptable manipulation" in proposing a nine percent pullback from the West Bank, a figure it said undermines the U.S. proposal to restart the peace process.

"This is unacceptable manipulation, because it undermines the whole American proposal [and now] it seems that there is no hope of an Israeli pullback of the U.S.-proposed scope," Egyptian Foreign Minister Amr Musa said.

Washington is pushing Israel to pull back from a further 13.1 percent of the West Bank, but Israel has so far offered to

hand over another nine percent to the Palestinians, saying a greater withdrawal would threaten its security.

During meetings this week with U.S. Secretary of State Madeleine Albright in Washington, Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu offered to cede nine percent to the Palestinians with another two percent at a later date provided there were additional security guarantees, according to Israeli press reports.

Mr. Musa said after meeting with his counterpart Jawad Anani and Egyptian President Hosni Mubarak that Mr. Netanyahu's proposal represented "no progress" and

showed that Israel "was not serious about the peace process."

Dr. Anani said Jordan and Egypt needed to coordinate "now that the region is about to go through a very difficult period."

"Palestinian President Yasser Arafat needs Arab support and assistance and diplomatic efforts have to continue to be deployed."

Mr. Mubarak is due to visit France on Monday for a three-day state visit during which he will meet French President Jacques Chirac on the state of the peace process, which has been deadlocked since March last year.

German foreign minister to Turkey

KOBLENZ (AFP) — German Foreign Minister Klaus Kinkel has accepted an invitation to visit Turkey to try to normalise strained bilateral relations, the newspaper Rhein-Zeitung said in its Saturday edition.

Turkey has been angry at Germany since a European Union (EU) summit in December snubbed its request for EU admission.

Ankara accuses Bonn of being behind the EU's decision to exclude Turkey from a list of potential new EU member states. Both the German gov-

ernment and the EU have denied this.

In an interview, Mr. Kinkel told the paper he had been invited to Ankara by his Turkish counterpart Ismail Cem, although the date was not yet set.

Mr. Kinkel said of the diplomatic impasse: "It's time we got out of this rut."

Relations reached a new low in March, when Turkey's Prime Minister Mesut Yilmaz likened Germany's European policy to the aggressive "Lebensraum" theory of Hitler's Third Reich, a statement Mr. Kinkel described as a "fit of madness."

Calling on Ankara in the interview to cease publicly attacking Germany, Mr. Kinkel said: "Turkey is a candidate [for EU membership] but it will take time."

The minister identified the main obstacles to Turkey's EU membership as its occupation of northern Cyprus together with unresolved problems involving Turkey's Kurdish minority and the Turkish human rights record.

Egypt demands Sudan extradite suspect in Mubarak death plot

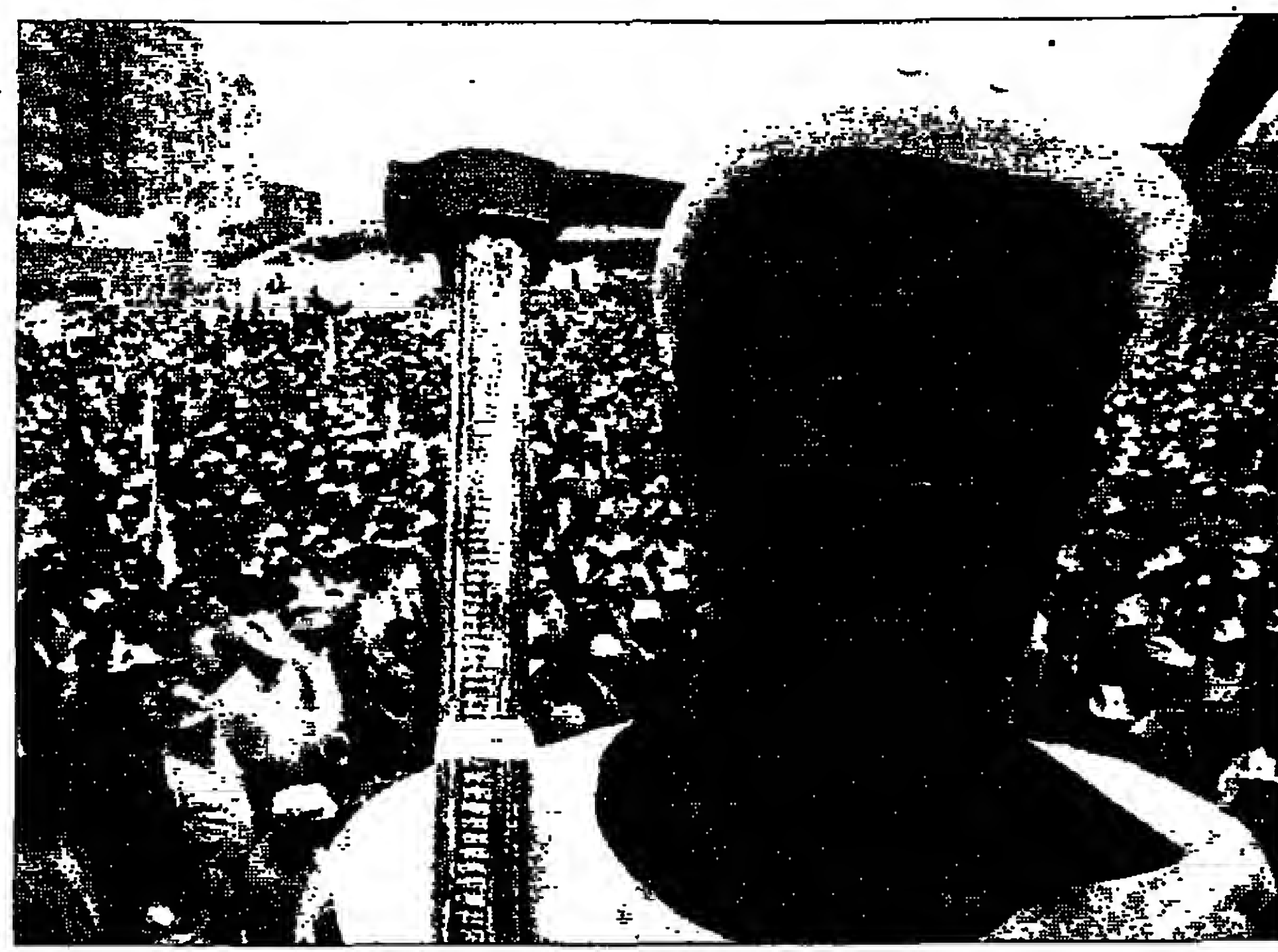
CAIRO (AFP) — Egypt said Saturday it is seeking the extradition from Sudan of a third Egyptian Islamist accused of taking part in the 1995 assassination attempt on President Hosni Mubarak.

An Egyptian security official said Cairo handed over the name of Islam al Ghamri, alias Ezzat Yassin, a leader of Egypt's main armed Islamic opposition group, the Gamaa Islamiyya.

Egypt accuses Mr. Ghamri of planning the 1995 attack against Mr. Mubarak in the Ethiopian capital Addis Ababa, along with Gamaa military chief Mustafa Hamza and Mohammad Sirag.

Mr. Mubarak has accused Sudan of serving as a haven for the attack's planners, but Khartoum denies the charge and has said Mr. Hamza and Mr. Sirag have long left its territory.

Egypt and Sudan began taking steps to normalise relations at the end of last year but have made on-again, off-again progress.



A coal miner carries his pickaxe Saturday as he joins nearly 30,000 Turkish workers marching through the streets of Ankara to protest government plans to privatise dozens of state-run enterprises this year (AFP photo)

30,000 Turkish workers stage rally against privatisation

ANKARA (AFP) — Nearly 30,000 Turkish workers marched Saturday through the streets of Ankara to protest government plans to privatise dozens of state-run enterprises this year.

The rally was staged by the Turkish Confederation of Trade Unions, or Turk-Is, the country's largest trade union group, which has more than 1.5 million members.

Trade union leaders accused the government of threatening a major wave of unemployment with the planned privatisation.

Conservative Prime Minister Mesut Yilmaz's government last month privatised service licenses for mobile telecommunications, raising one billion dollars from the sale to two mobile phone operators.

The government also plans to privatise several state-run banks, power plants and ports this year. Mr. Yilmaz has said he expects to raise nine billion dollars in 1998 from the largest privatisation wave in Turkey's history.

Yemeni PM forms new government, few changes

SANAA (AFP) — Yemen's new Prime Minister Abdul Karim Iryani selected a new government on Saturday, with only a few changes in the top economic cabinet posts.

The move followed the resignation two weeks ago of former premier Faraj Ben Ghanem after bitter wrangling with President Ali Abdullah Saleh over economic reforms for Yemen, one of the world's poorest countries.

The major change was the appointment of former planning and development minister Abdul Kader Bajammal as deputy prime minister and as foreign minister, the post formerly held by Mr. Iryani.

Mr. Bajammal, who joined the government during the civil war between northern and southern forces in 1994, was replaced in the planning ministry by former industry minister Ahmad Mohammad Sufan.

Taking over the industry portfolio is former trade minister Abdul Rahman Mohammad Ali Othman, who is replaced by Abdul Aziz Kumayem.

Three key ministers retained their posts: Defence Minister Mohammad Daifallah, Interior Minister Hussein Arab and Justice Minister Ismail Wazir.

This is Mr. Iryani's second term as prime minister, after serving three years from October 1980 to November 1983, and he has also been secretary general of the president's ruling General People's Congress since 1995.

Most of the cabinet's 30 members belong to the GPC.

Mr. Iryani has held several government posts since 1968 and like his predecessor is considered a financial expert and good administrator.

Sudan rebels accused of attempting to control oil fields

KHARTOUM (AFP) — Sudanese rebels have tried in vain to capture the Hiliig oil fields of West Kordofan, the armed forces spokesman claimed Saturday, announcing a death toll of more than 90.

General Abdul Rahman Ismail Khetim accused the Sudan People's Liberation Army (SPLA) of seeking to control the fields but said they had been beaten back.

In an interview published by the Al Rai Al Aam daily Saturday, Gen. Khetim said recent raids by the (SPLA) on the border of central Kordofan province and neighbouring Bahr Al Ghazal were aimed at "opening a route to the oil fields in Hiliig area."

The rebels were reported to have made several attacks in the past week on tribes in the area, killing dozens of civilians and stealing thousands of livestock.

However, the spokesman said "joint efforts by the armed forces and the civilians blocked the road to the oil fields."

He added that 56 civilians were killed in the attacks, while casualties among the rebels in the counter-attacks "are now being counted."

NEWS IN BRIEF

Iranian customs officials sentenced to death for corruption

TEHRAN (AFP) — Three Iranian customs officials and a business broker were sentenced to death Saturday, and 21 others sentenced to prison terms of up to 21 years in connection with a corruption scandal, state television said. A court also suspended nine other customs officials from the civil service for between three years to life in connection with fraud at the customs office of Tehran's Mehrabad airport, and handed down fines to seven others. The 41 people were part of a ring involved in "illegal exports" at the airport customs office, the television said. The ring was uncovered following the arrest of the former deputy head of Mehrabad's customs office Reza Tunuchi and former head of airport customs Mohammad Samadi, the report said. Tunuchi was given 10 years in jail and fined 450 million rials (\$130,000).

Palestinians arrest Arab-Israeli TV journalist over report on religious tension

BETHLEHEM (AFP) — Palestinian security arrested a journalist for an Israeli television station Saturday over a report on tensions between Christians and Muslims in Bethlehem, a Palestinian source said. Faysal Omar, who works for the Arab service of Israeli public television, was arrested at his home in the self-rule West Bank town after the Palestinian National Authority deemed the report "false and provocative" and said it "sabotages the image of Palestinians."

Turkish jet returns to airport after bomb threat

ANKARA (AP) — An Istanbul-bound Turkish Airlines jet with 130 passengers aboard returned to Ankara after a bomb threat and made a safe emergency landing Saturday. No one was injured, a news report said. The passengers, including Turkish Culture Minister Istemihan Talay, were evacuated immediately after the landing, the Anatolia News Agency said. Security personnel who searched the plane found no evidence of a bomb on the jet, the agency reported. The Boeing 737 aircraft, Flight TK119, had taken off for Istanbul at 10:30 a.m. The bomb threat came from an unidentified person who called Ankara's Esenboga Airport about 20 minutes after the plane took off, the report said.

Lebanon to hang double murderers

BEIRUT (AFP) — Two men convicted for a double murder three years ago will be publicly hanged next week, the first executions in Lebanon in just over a year, a judicial official said on Saturday. Wissam Nayef Iss, 46, and Hassan Abu Habb, convicted of shooting dead a man and his sister during an attempted burglary in 1995, will be hanged in the central square of Tabarja, a town north of Beirut, on Tuesday. A total of 12 people have so far been executed in Lebanon since 1994, including two Syrian soldiers and an Egyptian national, despite calls by several human rights groups for the death penalty to be abolished. The nationality of the two men to be hanged is not known.

Police destroy drug plantation in eastern Lebanon

BEIRUT (AP) — Police destroyed a poppy field near the ancient Roman town of Baalbek Saturday as part of the government's crackdown on illegal drugs in Lebanon, security officials said. Some 50 drug enforcement officers destroyed about 10 kilometres of hashish plantation in the village of Youneen, 30 kilometres Northeast of Baalbek in eastern Lebanon, said the officials, speaking on customary condition of anonymity. They gave no further details. Lebanon's drug trade thrived during the lawless days of the 1975-90 civil war, especially in the eastern Bekaa Valley. Since the end of the conflict, the Lebanese army, backed by Syrian security forces deployed in the region, has destroyed most of the hashish plantations.

Russian lawmakers approve air service with Israel

MOSCOW (AP) — Lawmakers have approved an agreement allowing regular air service between Russia and Israel. The agreement, approved Friday, calls for regular passenger and cargo flights between Moscow and St. Petersburg in Russia and Tel Aviv and Eilat in Israel, the ITAR-TASS news agency said. Airlines would also be able to take passengers on to third countries. Lawmakers said the air links should foster the development of economic and political relations between Moscow and Israel, which only restored diplomatic relations in 1991 after a 24-year rupture caused by the 1967 Arab-Israeli war.

Home Queen, Sw inaugurate

AMMAN (AP) — Queen Rania of Jordan and the Swedish King Carl XVI Gustaf inaugurated the new Jordanian National Theatre on Saturday. The ceremony, held in the presence of the Jordanian and Swedish royal families, marked the opening of the new theatre, which was designed by the Swedish architect Jan Wallander. The theatre is located in the heart of Amman and is considered one of the most modern and advanced in the Middle East. The inauguration ceremony was attended by a large number of guests, including members of the Jordanian and Swedish royal families, as well as officials from the Jordanian and Swedish governments. The new theatre is expected to become a major cultural and entertainment venue for Jordan and the region.



Young Jordanian audience in first

By Jean-Louis Elias

AMMAN (AP) — The Jordanian National Theatre, which opened its doors on Saturday, has already received a warm reception from the public. The theatre's first performance, a play by the Swedish playwright Jan Wallander, was a great success. The audience, which included many young people, was enthusiastic and enjoyed the performance. The new theatre is expected to become a major cultural and entertainment venue for Jordan and the region.

JORDAN TELEVISION

Tel. 773111-19

PROGRAMME TWO

- 15:10 Cartoon — Pumpkin Patch
- 15:20 Cartoon — The Pink Panther
- 15:30 — Skippy
- 16:00 The American Chart Show
- 17:00 — In The Wild
- 18:00 — French Programme
- 19:00 — Le Journal
- 19:15 French Programme — Science Magazine (E-M6)
- 19:30 — News Headlines
- 19:35 Life's Most Embarrassing Moments
- 20:00 Documentary — Taste of Africa
- 20:30 Talk Show — Challenges
- 21:10 — Drama — Renegade
- 22:00 — News in English
- 22:30 — Correlli
- 23:59 — Comedy — The Nanny
- 00:30 — End of T.X.

PRAYER TIMES

- 04:03 — Fajr
- 05:33 — (Sunrise) Duha
- 12:32 — Dhuhur
- 16:13 — Asr
- 19:31 — Maghreb
- 21:00 — Isha

CHURCHES

- St. Mary of Nazareth Church Swefieh, Tel. 5920740
- Assemblies of God Church Tel.

JORDAN TIMES DAILY GUIDE AND CALENDAR

WEATHER	
Bulletin supplied by the Department of Meteorology	
Temperatures are expected to rise significantly with relative warm and dusty weather conditions prevailing, clouds appearing at different altitudes, and winds southeasterly to southwesterly moderate.	
Temperatures are expected to drop on Monday. In Aqaba, it will be warm and dusty, winds northerly moderate, and seas calm.	
Min./Max. temp.	
Amman.....14/31	
Aqaba.....20/36	
Deserts.....12/33	
Jordan Valley.....18/35	
Yesterday's high temperatures: Amman 25, Aqaba 32. Humidity readings: Amman 35 per cent, Aqaba 42 per cent.	
USEFUL TELEPHONE NUMBERS	
NIGHT DUTY	
AMMAN:	
Dr. Bassam Karadsbeh.....4389200	
Dr. Rami Mazzawi.....894788	
Dr. Salman Daboubi.....776751	
Dr. Khalid Abdo.....4657129	
Firas pharmacy.....5661912	
Ferdows pharmacy.....778336	
Al Asena pharmacy.....4637055	
Nairookh pharmacy.....4623672	
Al Salam pharmacy.....4636730	
Yaacoub pharmacy.....4644945	
Shmeisani pharmacy.....4637660	
Najib pharmacy.....5347632	
IRBID:	
Dr. Ahmad Qano.....281484	
Al Quds pharmacy.....(—)	
ZARQA:	
Dr. Samir Al Lawzi.....989601	
Khalifeh pharmacy.....985417	
EMERGENCIES	
Food Control Centre.....4637111	
Civil Defence Immediate Rescue.....4630341	
Civil Defence Emergency.....199	
Rescue Police 192.....4621111, 4637777	
Fire Brigade.....4617101	
Blood Bank.....775121	
Highway Police.....843402	
Traffic Police.....896390	
Public Security Dept.....4630321	
Hotel Complaints.....5605800	
Price Complaints.....5661176	
Water & Sewerage Complaints.....897467	
Amman Municipality Complaints.....787111	
Telephone Information (directory assistance).....121	
Overseas Calls.....010230	
Central Amman Telephone Repairs.....4623101	
Abdali Tel. Repairs.....5661101	
Jordan Television.....773111	
Radio Jordan.....774111	
Water Authority.....5680100	
J. Electricity Authority.....815615	
Electric Power Co.....4636381	
RJ Flight Information.....44-53200	
Queen Alia Intl. Airport.....44-53200	

HOSPITALS	
AMMAN:	
The Arab Centre for Heart and Special Surgery 5921199	
The Islamic, Abdli.....5666131/7	
Hussein Medical Centre Tel. 5 856856	
Luzmila.....4630195	
Khalidi Maternity.....4644281/6	
Akileh Maternity.....4642441/2	
Jabal Amman Maternity 4642362	
Malhas, J. Amman.....4636140	
Palestine, Shmeisani.....5607071	
Shmeisani Hospital.....5669131	
University Hospital.....5353444	
Al-Muasher Hospital 5667227/9	
Al-Ahli, Abdali.....5664164/6	
Italian, Al-Muhajreen 7711013	
Al-Bashir.....7751112/6	
Army, Marka.....8916111/5	
Queen Alia Hospital 5602240/50	
Amal Hospital.....5674155	
ZARQA:	
Zarqa Govt. Hospital.....(09)983323	
Zarqa National Hospital.....(09)900560	
Ibn Sina Hospital.....(09)986732	
Al Hikma Modern Hospital.....(09)990990	
IRBID:	
Princess Basma Hospital.....(02)275555	
Greek Catholic Hospital.....(02)272275	
Ibn Al Nafes Hospital.....(02)247100	
AQABA:	
Princess Haya Hospital (03)314111	
FOR THE TRAVELLER	
QUEEN ALIA INTERNATIONAL AIRPORT	
This information is supplied by Royal Jordanian (RJ) information department at the Queen Alia International Airport Tel. (44) 53200-5, where it should always be verified. Information on other flights can be supplied on phone (44) (52700)	
ARRIVALS	
Royal Jordanian (RJ) Flights	
09:30 — Jeddah (RJ)	
09:45 — Lamaca (RJ)	
10:00 — Bombay (RJ)	
10:00 — Dhahran, Riyadh (RJ)	
10:25 — Beirut (RJ)	
10:50 — Dubai, Abu Dhabi (RJ)	
17:45 — New York, Amsterdam (RJ)	
18:00 — Paris (RJ)	
18:45 — Brussels, Milan (RJ)	
19:10 — Athens (RJ)	
20:15 — London, Geneva (RJ)	
20:25 — Madrid, Aqaba (RJ)	
21:20 — Vienna (RJ)	
21:25 — Frankfurt, Berlin (RJ)	
22:35 — Rome, Istanbul (RJ)	
02:45 — Cairo (RJ)	
DEPARTURES	
Royal Jordanian (RJ) Flights	
06:30 — Lamaca (RJ)	
06:45 — Beirut (RJ)	
09:15 — Frankfurt, Berlin (RJ)	
12:15 — Tunis, Casablanca (RJ)	
12:30 — Rome (RJ)	
12:30 — Amsterdam, New York (RJ)	
12:45 — Vienna (RJ)	
13:20 — London (RJ)	
15:20 — Athens (RJ)	
21:00 — New Delhi (RJ)	
21:20 — Jeddah (RJ)	
22:35 — Abu Dhabi, Dubai (RJ)	
22:15 — Damascus (RJ)	
23:00 — Cairo (RJ)	
23:15 — Bangkok (RJ)	
23:40 — Samara (RJ)	
00:30 — Kuala Lumpur, Jakarta (RJ)	
Other Flights	
06:15 — Beirut (ME)	
07:15 — Tel Aviv (LA)	
07:30 — Paris (AF)	
07:35 — Damascus, London (BA)	
07:50 — Frankfurt (LH)	
12:00 — Al Hudaidah (YY)	
14:00 — Jeddah (SV)	
14:10 — Moscow (SU)	
14:25 — Doha (GF)	
14:30 — Doha (QR)	
21:10 — Tel Aviv (LA)	
22:40 — Cairo (MS)	
02:15 — Beirut, Amsterdam (KL)	
ARRIVALS	
Royal Wings (RW)	
10:20 — Aqaba (arriving at QAIA and proceeding to Marka Airport (RW))	
10:35 — Tel Aviv (QAIA) (RW)	
23:25 — Aqaba (arriving at Marka Airport) (RW)	
23:25 — Dhahran, Riyadh (RJ)	
10:25 — Beirut (RJ)	

DEPARTURES	
Royal Jordanian (RJ) Flights	
06:30 — Lamaca (RJ)	
06:45 — Beirut (RJ)	
09:15 — Frankfurt, Berlin (RJ)	
12:15 — Tunis, Casablanca (RJ)	
12:30 — Rome (RJ)	
12:30 — Amsterdam, New York (RJ)	
12:45 — Vienna (RJ)	
13:20 — London (RJ)	
15:20 — Athens (RJ)	
21:00 — New Delhi (RJ)	
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07:35 — Damascus, London (BA)	
07:50 — Frankfurt (LH)	

Queen, Swiss President Cotti inaugurate restored Petra siq

AMMAN (J.T.) — Her Majesty Queen Noor and the president of the Swiss Confederation, Flavio Cotti, on Saturday inaugurated the restored historic siq (passageway) leading into Petra, according to a press release.

The siq, a natural gorge that the Nabataeans used as their entrance to the city of Petra, was excavated, consolidated and restored with Swiss funding.

In November 1993, Jordan and the Swiss Confederation signed an agreement to reduce the country's external debt and create a counterpart fund. Fifteen per cent of the fund was allocated to the preservation and development of tourism in Petra.

The Petra National Trust (PNT), a non-governmental organisation for the preservation of Petra, became the beneficiary of the fund.

The PNT, in cooperation with the Department of Antiquities, financed the exposure of the original pavement of the siq and its consolidation as well as the restoration of the components of the Nabataean systems flanking the siq to protect it from flash floods.

Queen Noor, PNT honorary chairperson and patron, said that this event not only honours "our Jordanian-Swiss partnership in conserving and rehabilitating the siq" but also recreates and perpetuates "the

positive values that inspired the Nabataeans to great deeds in their time."

The Queen noted that the Nabataean legacy "reminds us that we can best promote sustainable human and economic development by respecting our environment, our heritage and the dignity of our fellow human beings."

She expressed her hope that the start to "our journey together [would lead to] a world defined by beauty and creativity, enriched by the forces of productivity and cross-cultural interaction, and perpetuated by the values of nature conservation and human responsibility."

In his speech, President Cotti said the siq is where a beautiful and intense relationship between Jordan and Switzerland began 200 years ago with the Swiss explorer Johann Ludwig Burckhardt, who rediscovered Petra for the West in 1812 and converted to Islam assuming the name of "Sheikh Ibrahim Ibn Abdullah," the statement added.

He expressed his pride that Switzerland, through its contribution, has restored to "the siq its ancient beauty and real significance that [has] enabled it to become once again the living gateway to one of the most precious and refined civilisations of the beginning of the first millennium in the Middle East: the civilisation of

the Nabataeans."

HRH Prince Ra'd, PNT president, said two studies were conducted on the siq restoration project by Swiss archaeologist Ueli Bellwald and Ma'an Al Huneidi. He said these studies formed the basis of the restoration activities.

Prince Ra'd added that results of the "excavation findings, which are now being studied in conjunction with another Swiss institution, the Liechtenstein University of Basel, will constitute a major contribution towards the knowledge and understanding of our Nabataean heritage."

Prince Ra'd said the restored Nabataean hydraulic system could play an important role in water harvesting for use in the Petra region.

He noted that the success of the project was only possible through the very close teamwork of the Ministry of Tourism, the Department of Antiquities, the Petra Regional Planning Council and the Jordanian Swiss Bilateral Committee, the statement added.

Also attending the ceremony were Swiss Ambassador G.F. Pedotti and his wife, Minister of Tourism and Antiquities Akel Biltaji, the director of the Department of Antiquities, Ghazi Bisheh, and other officials, the announcement concluded.



Karim Sa'id in concert (Photo by Jean-Claude Elias)

Young Jordanian pianist amazes audience in first major performance

By Jean-Claude Elias
Special to the Jordan Times

AMMAN — The recital given last Wednesday at the Royal Cultural Centre by nine-year-old pianist Karim Sa'id can be qualified as exceptional without any exaggeration.

Though it was not Karim's first public appearance, it was nevertheless his first serious solo performance in a real concert hall. The event was held under the patronage of Her Majesty Queen Noor and was organised by the National Music Conservatory (NMC) in cooperation with the hotels Inter-Continental in Amman and Bucharest.

Without actually seeing this very young boy on stage, one would have thought that someone much older, and very talented too, was playing. Karim Sa'id is more than just a young boy playing well. He already has the attitude, the musicality and the self-assurance of a concert pianist.

His technique is unusually advanced for his age. Fast passages and difficult arpeggios

don't seem to scare him at all. His left hand is already strong and he has an undeniable sense for dynamics and tempi. The recital started with three studies followed by the invention No. 14 by Bach. At this

REVIEW

stage, the audience was hardly believing what it was hearing. Karim then played a sonata by Clementi, the well-known fantasia in D-minor by Mozart and six variations on a duet by Beethoven. The ease with which the young boy sailed through these pieces was flabbergasting. It is worth mentioning that all pieces were memorised; Karim didn't need to look at score sheets.

Chopin's waltz in A-minor was interpreted with the level of musical expression that usually requires several years of study and a good understanding of the piece. "Jog Tiganesc," a modern, original composition by Tudor Ciortea from Romania, delighted the audience.

The concert ended with Brahms' Hungarian dance No. 5, which Karim Sa'id played in duet with his teacher, Agnes Bashir. The pianist was greeted with a standing ovation that ended only when he began playing an encore. He chose "What a wonderful world," the song made famous by Louis Armstrong.

Naturally, the young musician still has to polish some aspects of his technique. For instance, he tends to rush into fast passages instead of playing them at the right speed. But this is only normal for a boy who is not yet ten, and it does not make his performance less brilliant. He has all the time to become a pianist of international standard.

Karim will go to Romania next month to participate in the "Pro-Piano" competition. There is little doubt that the teaching of Agnes Bashir and the support of his parents are playing a major role in Karim's success.

His natural talent, however, can only be explained as God-given.

Medical association calls for boycott of seminar expected to include Israeli doctors

By Mohammad Ben Hussein
Special to the Jordan Times

AMMAN — The Jordan Medical Association (JMA) asked its members on Saturday to boycott an upcoming audiology seminar hosted by the Royal Medical Centre (RMC) because Israeli doctors will participate.

The association also repeated past warnings that it will take "punitive action" against members who violate association rules prohibiting any form of contact with Israelis, including vis-

its to the Jewish state made possible after Jordan signed the peace treaty with Israel in 1994.

JMA President Bassem Dajani urged doctors not to attend Sunday's conference, expected to attract over 150 doctors from the Middle East and elsewhere.

"It's not a new decision," he told the Jordan Times, referring to a four-year-old policy of the 12 professional associations to suspend the membership of any fellow who makes contacts with Israelis. "It was taken

years ago and what we are doing now is reminding our colleagues of it."

The government says their decision is illegal because it violates the spirit of the treaty, which became law after Parliament endorsed it.

Dr. Dajani refused to elaborate on the nature of measures to be taken by the JMA against those who take part in the medical gathering.

The membership of dozens in the 80,000-strong associations, grouping engineers, lawyers, nurses and

pharmacists, have been suspended either because they visited Israel or talked to Israelis. Others have been referred to disciplinary committees that normally look into the degree of violation before recommending appropriate action.

An RMC spokesperson declined to comment on the three-day meeting.

"We cannot tell you anything," he said when asked to give details on the conference.

The government has repeatedly asked profes-

sional unions to focus on improving professional standards instead of taking an active role in politics.

Islamists, who view Israel as their ideological enemy and advocate the destruction of the Jewish state, dominate most of the unions.

Around 80 per cent of Jordan's 4.5 million population oppose normalisation with Israel, according to a recent study conducted by the Centre for Strategic Studies at the University of Jordan.

Cabinet forms delegation to discuss Jordan-U.S. agricultural deal

AMMAN (Petra) — The Council of Ministers on Saturday formed a delegation led by the secretary general of the Ministry of Industry, Trade and Supply to travel to the U.S. to follow up on procedures for awarding a Jordanian tender to purchase 120,000 tonnes of American wheat.

The wheat, which costs \$18 million, will be paid for from the 1998 U.S. aid programme to Jordan, according to a Cabinet statement.

The Council of Ministers endorsed memoranda that will be exchanged by Jordan and Germany concerning water projects and authorised Minister of Planning Rima Khalaf to sign them on the government's behalf. It also gave its consent to the exchange of memoranda between Jordan and Germany over German technical aid to fight agricultural pests.

The Council formed a delegation to take part in a conference on trade and agriculture to be held in Gaza from May 25-27. The delegation will also hold a meeting with an Israeli delegation on trade and agricultural exchanges.

During the regular Cabinet session, a delegation was formed to attend a meeting at the Arab League headquarters in Cairo on May 17-18 to discuss trade issues among Arab states.

The Council of Ministers appointed Mohammad Daoudieh as Jordan's ambassador to Morocco and Nabih Shuqom as the secretary general of the Foreign Ministry.

Draft law on traffic strategy council finalised

AMMAN (J.T.) — The Ministry of Interior Saturday announced that it has finalised a draft law on the establishment of a higher traffic council to supervise the implementation of national strategies on road movement and safety in the Kingdom.

Ministry Secretary General Hashem Sabbagh said the draft law, which was drawn up in conjunction with the Public Security Department (PSD), is needed because the country at present has no traffic strategies nor is there coordination among the various organisations concerned with the traffic sector, which he noted continue to

operate separately from each other.

Dr. Sabbagh said this law is also required due to the growing number of road accidents in the Kingdom, traffic congestion and other problems.

Last week, the PSD said there were 39,005 road accidents in Jordan in 1997, leading to the death of 577 persons and the injury of 16,259 others.

In 1993, 24,799 road accidents killed 440 people and injured 11,754 others.

According to Dr. Sabbagh, the Ministry of Interior has now referred the draft law to the Council of Ministers for examination before it is sent to the

Lower House of Parliament for approval.

Dr. Sabbagh said the projected traffic council will enjoy administrative and financial independence. The council members will include representatives from the ministries of public works, transport, planning, health, and municipal and rural affairs, and the Greater Amman Municipality, he added.

The council will hold regular sessions in which representatives of concerned parties can attend and present ideas and suggestions to help put the law into force, he said.

Dr. Sabbagh stated that the council will be entrusted

with creating a traffic institute, which in turn will be responsible for training personnel involved in the traffic sector. The institute will also conduct traffic-related studies and suggest means of improving the traffic system and dealing with traffic problems, according to Dr. Sabbagh.

Council revenues, he said, will consist of contributions and grants, 10 per cent of the total amount of fines levied against traffic violators and part of the sales tax charged by automobile insurance companies.

The council will present annual reports on its functions to the Council of Ministers, he added.

Four convicted for 1996 of attacks return to court to face new charges

By Rana Hussein
Jordan Times Staff Reporter

AMMAN — Four men who were convicted in 1996 of carrying out extremist attacks went on trial Saturday at the State Security Court on new charges after their case was referred from a civil court.

Tha'er Yousef, 27, Shadi Jawdat, 21, Ibrahim Mohammad Abdul Thaber Zein Al Abedeine, 29, and Ghassan Fa'eq, 27, are now being tried for possessing illegal weapons (automatic rifles) and for belonging to an illegal organisation.

The four, part of a group of five, are serving five-year prison terms each after being convicted by the State Security Court in December 1996 of attacking the General Intelligence Department (GID) building in Baqaa in November 1994.

Their case was referred from a civil court, the Salt Court of First Instance, to the State Court by the Court of Cassation, which asked it to try the men on

the new charges "because they fall under its jurisdiction."

A judicial source told the Jordan Times on Saturday that the Court of Cassation's decision "comes in accordance with amended laws that were approved by the Council of Ministers in February 1997."

According to the source, the two charges that will now be examined by the State Court are crimes that violate general security and crimes that involve possessing illegal weapons.

However, in Saturday's court session, Defence Attorney Mohammad Dweik contested the State Court's jurisdiction, stating that "the new law applies only in cases that have not been heard in court, and my clients' case has already been heard at the Salt Court of First Instance."

But the State Court, which was presided over by Judge Yousef Fa'ouri and included Judges Ahmad Ayash and Yousef Udwan, rejected the defence's request.

The military court, which will now hear all the witnesses from both the civil and 1996 trials and review all the evidence, postponed the case until May 23.

The military prosecution charged that the men conducted the attack on the GID building to avenge the arrest of Zein Al Abedeine, who the prosecution alleged was the group leader, three days earlier, as well as the State Security Court's sentencing on Dec. 24, 1994, of 11 Islamists known as the "Arab Afghan" to death and seven more to imprisonment.

Three of the four defendants are also standing trial at the Criminal Court for the attempted premeditated murder of Sergeant Mohammad Ali of the GID during the Dec. 26, 1994 assault on the GID building.

Atty. Dweik said the case was transferred from the civil court to the Criminal Court "because of some of the amendments to the Jordanian Penal Code."

"This means that my

clients could receive a longer sentence than the one they have already received," he told the Jordan Times.

If convicted by the Criminal Court on the attempted murder charges, the three men, who have already served three years in prison, could be sentenced to 15-year imprisonment terms, including the period they have already spent in detention.

The next Criminal Court session will take place on May 21, Atty. Dweik said.

According to the charge sheet, the suspects started their activities in April 1994 and plotted to carry out extremist attacks against tourists and security departments in the Kingdom and launch armed assaults in the West Bank.

On the eve of the attack, the first and second defendants, Tha'er Yousef and Shadi Jawdat, headed to the GID after night prayers and sprayed the GID building with bullets from machine guns, injuring the officer, before fleeing the scene.

Students hold on-campus march to mark nakbeh anniversary

By Tareq Ayyoub
Special to the Jordan Times

AMMAN — University of Jordan students Saturday marched inside the campus and burnt Israeli and U.S. flags to commemorate the 50th anniversary of the nakbeh, or the "catastrophe" of the occupation of Palestine in 1948.

More than 1,500 students, carrying an effigy of a Palestinian "martyr" killed by Israeli soldiers, chanted anti-Israel slogans during the 90-minute peaceful protest, organised by the university's student council.

The students also carried Palestinian and black flags. One masked student poured kerosene on the U.S. and Israeli flags before one of his colleagues set them on fire to the applause of hundreds of students.

Police and security agents refrained from interfering in the rally, witnesses said. Women, wearing head-to-toe Islamic dress, also carried copies of the Koran during the march.

The student council's chairperson, Al Harith Fakhri Issa, urged the gov-

ernment to stop all talks with Israel and sever diplomatic ties with the Jewish state.

"What occurred in the past and what is happening now are nothing but episodes of the crimes committed by the Jews against our people in Palestine," said Mr. Issa.

"The butcher is still living on our lands while thousands of Palestinians are living as refugees. This should come to an end," he added.

"We call upon our government to cancel all agreements with the Jews and join hands with Arabs and Muslims to help in liberating our holy lands," Mr. Issa told the gathering.

The university administration allowed photographers and reporters to enter the campus and cover the rally. In similar events over the past two years, the administration has denied journalists access to the campus.

As in other universities in the Kingdom, the University of Jordan's student council is controlled by supporters of the Islamic Action



More than 1,500 students demonstrate Saturday at the University of Jordan carrying portraits of the Palestinians killed in the recent events in the West Bank (Photo by Yousef Allam)

Front, the political arm of the Muslim Brotherhood.

The rally was the first held in Jordan to commemorate the anniversary of the nakbeh, which led to the displacement of thousands of Palestinians from their

homeland in 1947.

The government turned down previous requests by opposition parties to hold rallies in different parts of the country. Earlier this month, the opposition cancelled a plan to hold a rally

at the professional associations building following a government ban.

They also postponed a march toward Jordan's borders with the occupied territories on May 15 for the same reason.

FILMS

* Spanish film "Blood Wedding" (with subtitles in English) at Instituto Cervantes, Jabal Amman at 5:00 p.m.

* "La Liza du Crime" a la French Cultural Centre, Jabal Weibdeh on Monday, May 18, at 6:30 p.m.

THE FIRST UNIVERSITIES THEATRE FESTIVAL

* "A Memory of Three Boxes" (in Arabic) at the Royal Cultural Centre at 7:00 p.m.

* University of Jordan play "The Chair" (in Arabic) at the Royal Cultural Centre on Monday, May 18, at 7:00 p.m.

CONCERTS

* The fourth concert by students of the National Music Conservatory at the University of Jordan, Al Hassan Ben Talal Auditorium at 6:00 p.m.

* Concert by Rula Talhouni at the Royal Cultural Centre at 8:00 p.m. (daily until May 21).

what's going on

* Concert by "Zebda" band at Yarmouk University, Irbid at 3:30 p.m.

LECTURE

* "The Challenges of Arab National Security" (in Arabic) by Dr. Haytham Security at Abdul Hameed Shoman Foundation, Jabal Amman on Monday, May 18, at 6:30 p.m.

ART SALE

* Sale of personal oil paintings of artist Mohammad Al Hadidi (at his residence), Dahiya: Al Rashid, near Al Dawaki Hotel (Tel. 5154567).

EXHIBITIONS

* Works by Mohammad Al Lahham at Al Madinah Gallery, Ras Al 'Ain (Tel. 743158), until May 23.

* Paintings by Abdul Aziz Al Hasak at Hammamouh Art Gallery, Gardens St. (Tel. 5536098), until May 26.

* Spring collection of ceramic items and rugs at Beit Al Bawadi showroom, Abdoun (Tel. 5925841/5920070), until May 24.

كلنا من الوطن

Germany's Kohl vows comeback election win

BONN (R) — Chancellor Helmut Kohl went on the offensive in his battle for reelection Saturday, vowing to score a come-from-behind victory against rival Gerhard Schröder in Germany's September general election.

Mr. Kohl, pictured shaking his fist by best-selling newspaper Bild, warned that if Social Democrat Schröder broke his 16-year grip on power, Germany would become a "second-rate" country.

"The match is only over when the referee blows the final whistle," Mr. Kohl told Bild in an interview. "So often the team which goes behind at first turns around the match and ends up the clear winner. That's what it will be like in the general election."

Mr. Kohl's ruling Christian Democrats (CDU) are gearing up for a party conference starting Sunday in Bremen which they hope will revive a flagging campaign which has left them trailing the Social Democrats (SPD) in the polls.

CDU campaign manager Peter Hintze promised Friday that Mr. Kohl, due to leave the Group of Eight summit in England Sunday, would deliver a "revolutionary" speech making clear that he was the only man fit to lead Germany into the 21st century.

Mr. Schröder, who at 54 is nearly 15 years younger than Mr. Kohl, has led a slick campaign which has attacked the government's jobs record and sought to woo moderate floating voters.

But Mr. Kohl, 68, accused Mr. Schröder of trying to capture votes from the so-called "new centre" through a "gigantic deception."

He said Mr. Schröder wanted to form a "red-green" alliance with the environmentalists, Greens, with the possible support of the Party of Democratic Socialism — the heirs to the Communist rulers of East Germany who are widely reviled in the West.

"What we are talking about is whether Germany slides into the second division under Red-Green, or whether we continue to play in the world league," Mr. Kohl told Bild.

Latest opinion polls give the SPD 43 per cent support, ahead of the CDU on 35 per cent. With Greens' support stabilising at around six per cent, Red-Green would have enough support to win a parliamentary majority, pollsters predict.

Mr. Kohl, whose battered image got a boost this week when U.S. President Bill Clinton visited Germany, said his number one priority remained fighting high unemployment.

He said he would also seek to restore German competitiveness in global markets and maintain aid to the struggling east.

"You can only succeed in the future if you are prepared to take risks," Mr. Kohl said. "That is what we are doing. But at the same time we are giving people the security that they need."

"That is what I stand for: renewal and security."



A nurse attends to a patient evacuated from a hospital after it caught fire in Manila. The fire raged through a Manila hospital, killing more than 12 patients who suffocated in their beds after power went out and cut their oxygen supplies, officials said (Reuters photo)

At least 19 die in Philippine hospital fire

MANILA (AFP) — Fire swept through a government hospital in Manila early Saturday morning, leaving at least 19 dead, some of whom suffocated when their respirators cut out during a power failure, officials said.

Fourteen people died after they were trapped inside the intensive care unit of the lung centre during a blaze which raged for more than 12 hours, officials said.

Four critically ill patients died when the respirators failed and a fifth died after he was transferred to a nearby hospital. Health Secretary Carmencita Rodica told AFP, "We tried to get into the ICU, but it was too hot and too smoky, no one could survive that," said Fernando Melendrez, head of medical services.

Mr. Melendrez said the other 160 patients at the hospital were transferred to four nearby hospitals for treatment and have been accounted for.

He said all staff nurses and doctors were safe but it was not known whether there were any visitors at the time the fire broke out.

Amuro Platon, a representative of the Health Department in charge of the area, said firefighters were still battling sporadic fires in several sections of the building late Saturday.

Small groups of distraught relatives waited in the driveway as firemen milled about. All ambulances in Manila were mobilised and all hospitals were ordered to take in displaced patients, Ms. Rodica said.

The relatives had to check a white board outside the hospital for a list of names of the patients transferred to other hospitals.

Ms. Rodica said it was doubtful any of the missing had survived. The fire also affected an adjacent state-run hospital, the National Kidney Institute, where a laboratory was destroyed.

Its patients were taken by stretcher out into the lobby and courtyard after smoke penetrated the building, hospital staff said.

Ms. Rodica said investigators were called in to determine whether the hospital was deliberately set ablaze, but later added that talk about possible arson was just "speculation" at this time.

Fire official Aurelio Tumbaga said the blaze broke out in a central area of the second floor. The cause had not been established but fire

inspectors were inside the building to gather evidence, he said.

A doctors' group, the Alliance of Health Workers, believes the fire was linked to the government's plan to sell the hospital to the private sector, the alliance's president Emma Manuel said over radio station DZRH.

Mr. Rodica confirmed the planned auction, saying it was being met with opposition by some groups she did not identify.

The lung centre, set up by former First Lady Imelda Marcos in the 1970s, specialises in respiratory diseases and sits on a sprawling lot in the northern Manila suburb of Quezon.

The minister snapped when an aide informed her that one private hospital was demanding written authorisation to take in some of the patients.

"This is an emergency," she barked to the aide on her mobile phone. "If they want I'll have the president (Fidel Ramos) call them."

A security guard told DZRH that an explosion and a power outage preceded the blaze. Some survivors said they had to get out through windows.

Church accused of shielding Rwanda genocide suspects

KIGALI (R) — A London-based human rights organisation has blasted the Catholic church, claiming that it gave sanctuary to clergy who were involved in the 1994 Rwandan genocide.

In an open letter to Pope Jean Paul II, the director of African Rights, Rakiya Omar, said this week at least three dozen members of the Rwandan clergy, both men and women, were suspected of complicity or even direct involvement in the slaughter of an estimated 800,000 Tutsis and moderate Hutus.

African Rights told the Pope that his 11th hour appeal for clemency for 22 genocide convicts, who were publicly executed in Rwanda last April 24, was insensitive and caused immense pain to survivors.

"There is compelling evidence that a number of bishops, priests, nuns and brothers were either complicit in the genocide, or participated directly in it," African Rights said in a press statement issued with the letter.

"Given the scale and consistency of the accusations, the reluctance of the Catholic church to act upon them is regrettable," it added, calling on the Pope to set up a commission of inquiry.

Chief Papal spokesman Joaquin Navarro-Valls said Saturday that the Vatican would have no immediate comment on the report.

African Rights, which has published numerous reports on the genocide and its aftermath, said its "research has shown that most of the accused remain in the heart of the Catholic church."

It said many were evacuated to European countries or now lived in parishes in other African countries.

It named some of the suspects. In Rwanda, the letter accused the Catholic hierarchy of putting pressure on priests and nuns to testify in favour of those clergy who have been imprisoned with 130,000 other genocide suspects.

The letter accused the Papal Nuncio in Rwanda, Bishop Julius Janusz, of having attitudes about the genocide which were "morally untenable and politically suspect."

It said two senior Rwandan clergy members, Archbishop Thadeus Ntshururwa and Bishop Augustin Misago, retained their positions despite heavy criticism about their own behaviour during and after the genocide.

"It is unlikely that the decision to confront the implications of the genocide will come from within the church in Rwanda," African Rights said, adding that this was its main motivation for writing to the Pope.

On the Pope's vain intervention before the April 24 executions, the letter accused him of double standards.

"Your concern for the nation of Rwanda, recently expressed in a telegram to President (Pasteur) Bizimungu — on the eve of the execution of 22 people convicted of genocide — is well known," the letter said.

"Unfortunately, the content of your appeal for clemency lacked sensitivity to the suffering experienced by the survivors of the genocide and has caused immense pain."

"These are the very people who are most in need of solace and spiritual sustenance. Their response to your appeal demonstrates just how weak the moral authority of the papacy has become among (genocide) survivors," it added.

Rakiya Omar told Reuters that African Rights did not support the executions but understood "why so many survivors believe it is better than the law being taken into their own hands."

Pakistan unlikely to conduct nuclear test in coming days

ISLAMABAD (AFP) — Pakistan is unlikely to conduct a nuclear test in the next few days but is keeping its options open over how to respond to India's tests, Western diplomatic sources said Saturday.

Any immediate plans for tests appeared to have been postponed following Prime Minister Nawaz Sharif's statement Friday that Pakistan was in no hurry, the sources said.

But they emphasised there was still a strong chance that Pakistan still wanted to test its own atomic weapon after India's five nuclear tests this week.

The New York Times reported that Pakistan might conduct a tit-for-tat test as early as Sunday.

Talks Friday between Pakistan and a U.S. mission led by Assistant Secretary of State Strobe Talbott ended inconclusively. Sources said that despite strong pressure from U.S. President Bill Clinton, Islamabad gave no assurance that it would not exercise the option of a test.

Diplomats said the threat of U.S. sanctions was unlikely to deter Pakistan. "There is no room for new sanctions," one said, referring to an existing U.S. ban on economic and military aid imposed in 1990 over Islamabad's nuclear program.

If Pakistan conducted a nuclear test it would be in response to Indian "provocation," one diplomat said. This week's five tests were totally different from Delhi's first in 1974, the diplomat said. "This time it is clearly a provocation."

Mr. Sharif said Friday that Pakistan had nuclear capability but had not chosen to test a bomb for the last 15 to 20 years.

"We are in no haste to test the bomb immediately after India has tested its bomb as we are a responsible nation," he told reporters before holding talks with the U.S. mission.

Pakistan will be carefully watching the world's attitude to the Indian tests and whether they take it "lightly or strongly," Mr. Sharif said.

"Whatever decision we make will be determined by our national security requirements," U.S. officials told reporters Friday that Pakistan had given no time-frame for any decision on conducting a nuclear test.

They said the U.S. mission was "reassured in several meetings authoritatively Pakistan had not made a final irrevocable decision" on the issue.

Answering a question on reports that the U.S. team offered economic and military incentives to forestall the test, Mr. Sharif said Pakistan did not want any sort of foreign aid at the expense of national interest.

"Our every step will be in the larger national interest of the country," he said. Reports said the U.S. team carried assurances that Pakistan would be rewarded if it showed restraint.

The reported U.S. offer included a settlement of the

1989 deal on 28 F-16 fighter aircraft for which Pakistan had already paid \$658 million, but the delivery remains stalled due to the U.S. curb on military sales to Islamabad.

According to the U.S. officials there were no suggestions of any "trade off" during the meetings, nor was there any list of things Islamabad wanted the U.S. to do.

They said Pakistan wanted the U.S. and international community to "sustain" the sanctions and their outrage at the tests, and did not want international opposition to prove to be temporary.

Islamabad wants to improve ties with the U.S. in a "number of areas" and is looking for Washington to play a role in resolving its disputes with India, the officials said.

The U.S. could not "intervene" nor was it in a position to mediate, but it would continue to use its good offices to encourage negotiations between the two countries, they added.

Estrada's lead grows in Philippine presidential race

MANILA, Philippines (AP) — Vice President Joseph Estrada, the main opposition candidate, broadened his lead with more than half the votes counted in the Philippine presidential race, a poll watchdog group said Saturday.

Mr. Estrada's party and business groups have expressed strong concern about the extremely slow pace of the tallying of Monday's elections and warned it could result in extensive fraud.

Former Manila Mayor Alfredo Lim added his warning Saturday as he became the third of the 10 presidential candidates to concede defeat.

"There are signs that those who would subvert the people's sovereign will have not yet given up," he said.

Post-election violence continued to mar what has been one of the Philippines' most peaceful general elections.

Hundreds of civilians fled from two towns in western Mindanao after grenade attacks by unidentified men on the homes of their mayors killed three people and injured dozens of others.

With 15,509,602 ballots counted or about 57 per cent of the total votes cast, Mr. Estrada was winning with about 37 per cent, the National Citizens' Movement for Free Elections said.

President Fidel Ramos' hand-picked candidate, House Speaker Jose de Venecia, was far behind in second place with about 15 per cent, followed by Senator Raul Roco with 14 per cent. A majority of the votes is not needed to win.

For vice president, who is elected separately, ruling party candidate Senator Gloria Macapagal-Arroyo remained on top with about 44 per cent of the votes.

Senator Edgardo Angara, Mr. Estrada's running mate, was a distant second with about 19 per cent.

The Commission on Elections estimates that some 80 per cent of the 34 million registered voters participated in Monday's polls.

Former Defence Secretary Renato de Villa and Senator Juan Ponce Enrile earlier conceded in the presidential race.

Japanese emperor to offer 'regret' for suffering of British POWs

LONDON (AFP) — Japanese Emperor Akihito is to voice his "regret" at the suffering of former British prisoners of war (POWs) during his state trip to Britain next week, the British press reported Saturday.

He will use a speech at a banquet given in his honour by Queen Elizabeth II at Buckingham Palace to try to defuse the POW dispute.

But he will stop short of making a formal apology, as demanded by British survivors of Japanese concentration camps, who have threatened protest demonstrations against the emperor throughout his state visit to Britain.

British Prime Minister Tony Blair discussed the issue with his Japanese counterpart Ryutaro Hashimoto on the sidelines of the Group of Eight (G8) most powerful nations' summit in Birmingham on Friday.

The Labour government has already made several moves aimed at taking the

heat out of the controversy surrounding the emperor's visit to avoid scenes similar to those.

Joint trips with British POWs and Japanese wartime cemetery sites in Asia are being organised and Queen Elizabeth last month awarded an OBE to a Japanese woman for her work in promoting reconciliation.

Earlier this year, when Mr. Blair visited Japan, Mr. Hashimoto wrote an article for the Sun, Britain's biggest newspaper, voicing regret for the treatment of British prisoners.

The Japanese emperor will receive the Order of the Garter, Britain's highest order for chivalry, from the queen, an honour which has drawn criticism.

War veterans' groups plan to turn their backs on Emperor Akihito when his procession passes through London. Many also plan to send back their war medals to Buckingham Palace.

Lebed communes with nature on eve of Krasnoyarsk vote

KRASNOYARSK, Russia (AFP) — Maverick nationalist Alexander Lebed took time out for a spot of fishing Saturday on the eve of elections in Krasnoyarsk in which he was tipped to oust incumbent governor Valery Zubov.

No further campaigning was allowed before Sunday's run-off election in the vast, mineral-rich Siberian region, which Mr. Lebed said he would have to build up before mounting any challenge for the Russian presidency.

Mr. Lebed, a retired general, won the first round on April 26 handsomely with 45 per cent of the vote, 10 points clear of Mr. Zubov.

"Once a week the human body needs to get rid of stress, that is, one must not drink. Well, I'm going to rest in the countryside. I know a little mountain stream near here," Mr. Lebed said on local television Friday.

Mr. Lebed's campaign staff confirmed that he had gone fishing Saturday near Krasnoyarsk, which lies by the mighty Yenisei River and is surrounded by mountains and forests.

Mr. Zubov was also out of town Saturday, but his aides gave no further comment.

In a move reminiscent of President Boris Yeltsin's glitzy 1996 reelection campaign, two celebrated Russian pop divas — Alla

Pugacheva and Lyudmila Zykina — flew to Krasnoyarsk Thursday to rally support for Mr. Zubov.

Mr. Lebed, an outspoken critic of the Moscow political establishment, rarely misses an opportunity to attack official corruption and crime, which he says has flourished under the Yeltsin administration.

Just over two million voters are registered for Sunday's elections in Krasnoyarsk, a territory four times the size of France, lying some 4,000 kilometres east of Moscow.

Mr. Lebed told local television Friday that as governor he would concentrate on reviving the economy of Krasnoyarsk, and would ditch his Kremlin aspirations — temporarily at least.

"It is not possible to turn around the situation in the region within two years, and it would be pointless to challenge for the presidency without having first built up the region," said Mr. Lebed, 48.

Declaring himself confident of victory, Mr. Lebed said he would set about overcoming "many obstacles and stupidities" in the region, one of which he cited as the appointment of his old adversary Anatoly Chubais as the head of Russia's electricity giant Unified Energy Systems.

Mr. Lebed came third in

the first round of the 1996 presidential elections with a surprise 15 per cent of the vote.

Mr. Yeltsin co-opted Mr. Lebed in a thinly veiled attempt to ensure victory in the run-off vote, appointing him national security chief.

But despite negotiating an end to the bloodbath in Chechnya, Mr. Lebed fell out with Mr. Yeltsin's aides, notably Mr. Chubais, and was sacked for overweening ambition and poor teamwork.

Mr. Lebed had made no secret of his intention to succeed Mr. Yeltsin by winning the next presidential polls, due in 2000, but last month he admitted that failure to win in Krasnoyarsk would shatter his presidential ambitions.

The importance of the Krasnoyarsk vote, particularly given Mr. Lebed's involvement, has not been lost on political leaders in Moscow, who have taken sides in the increasingly bitter battle.

The Communist Party, which accuses billionaire businessman and would-be Kremlin Kingmaker Boris Beresovsky of financing Mr. Lebed's campaign, called on its voters to support Mr. Zubov.

But the Communist call infuriated local party officials wary of orders from Moscow and determined to oust the incumbent.

Corsican link seen in French police station blast

MARSEILLE, France (R) — A powerful explosion shook a police station in southern France Saturday and police said they suspected a bomb attack by Corsican separatists.

No one was hurt and no one claimed responsibility for the blast in Aix-en-Provence. But Corsican guerrillas seeking greater autonomy from

mainland France claimed responsibility earlier this week for a bomb attack against a public building in Marseilles last Saturday.

"The idea that this was an act committed by Corsican separatists has considerable credibility," a police source said.

Corsica, birthplace of Emperor

Napoleon, is a Mediterranean island which is part of France. The Corsican National Liberation Front-Historical Wing (FLNC) said in a statement issued after the Marseilles bombing that it had ended a three-month truce in its "military fight" against Paris.

Aix-en-Provence is a popular tourist destination due to

its warm climate, stunning gardens, tree-lined avenues and numerous piazzas dotted with shops and outdoor cafés.

The blast did little harm to the police station but damaged seven cars parked nearby and shattered shop windows. Following the explosion, police tightened security in the city's centre.

Jordan Times

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No missed opportunity

DIFFERENT ASPECTS of parliamentary life will be discussed by Parliament when it reviews the draft elections law in its upcoming extraordinary session this summer. Unfortunately, a quota for women is not among the articles of the proposed law. By shelving a proposal by women's organisations and NGOs to grant women a percentage of seats in the Lower House of Parliament, the government missed a precious opportunity to accelerate Jordan's social development and enhance its democratic process. The House can introduce that quota to the law, but whether it would do that remains to be seen.

A quota for women, like that granted to so-called minorities and to bedouins, is a "corrective measure" that would enable our infant democracy to take roots.

It is regrettable that a positive discrimination measure like this one has not been introduced in the proposed elections law. That fact, however, should not discourage women in their commendable uphill struggle for equality.

As a practical, realistic and hard-working segment of society, Jordanian women have already started preparing for the 2001 elections. Through seminars and conferences they should be able to learn from their mistakes and devise new tactics in their drive to win seats in the 2001 House.

What they need now is a concerted campaign to convince the legislators that left on their own, women have little chance of sending more than a couple of deputies to the House. What makes the presence of women in the legislature all the more important is the fact that they, and their children, are discriminated against and need to have a stronger voice in Parliament to further their cause and influence the shape of laws pertaining to their affairs. It is not too late for women to at least attempt to influence the deputies. What women should be doing in the coming month is waging a public relations campaign to make their voice heard in the corridors of Parliament. There is a great deal of hope that our deputies will listen to their urging and heed their call.

ARABIC PRESS COMMENTARIES

Al Ra'i's Fakhri Kawa Saturday said the one million Palestinians who staged a march on the anniversary of the 1948 occupation of Palestine were not reacting to Israel's refusal to withdraw its troops from 13 per cent of the West Bank. Nine of those marchers were killed and many others wounded by the Israeli forces not because Israel continues to refuse the implementation of the Oslo accords, he added. The Palestinians are rebelling against continued oppression, against occupation, and in view of the absence of any progress towards their regaining their legitimate rights, Kawa said. The writer said the Palestinians are showing their wrath because they are bitter with frustration at the world community which refuses to impose its will on the Israeli occupation authorities. He said the Palestinians could not but rebel against the Israelis and they have expressed their determination to continue resisting the occupation and to fight for their freedom.

Al Arab Al Yawm's Saleh Qallab called on President Suharto of Indonesia to resign rather than watch the angry masses trampling him down. The president should take a lesson from other world dictators, who were evicted by their frustrated people and who met ignominious fate, said the writer. When a regime proves to be deeply involved in corruption the masses demand that it be removed and the people tend to forget all the good things the head of that regime had done for his people, Qallab said. He said many dictators who rose to power transformed their nations into property for their friends and their relatives and eventually were forced out under pressure from the masses who were fed up with corruption, and who saw their national economy deteriorating daily. The writer said Suharto, who now realises that his people are determined to remove him from power, should act promptly and resign to avoid further humiliation.

Sunday's Economic Pulse

Labour market must be regulated

Dr. Fahed Fanek

IT IS not true that transfers made by guest workers do not exceed JD110 million or \$150 million a year as claimed by the official document of the balance of payments. Assuming that the number of the non-Jordanians working in Jordan is around 400,000, and each saves and transfers abroad about \$100 a month, then the total amount would be close to half a billion dollars a year, quite a lot of money to a small economy of \$7 billion.

Guest workers obviously don't collect these amounts as gifts. They work hard to earn them. They are a genuinely productive force. Whatever money they collect is only a fraction of the value they produce, while their employers such as construction contractors, and farm, bakery and gas stations proprietors derive huge benefits.

On the positive side we notice that Jordanian workers are becoming a majority among sanitation workers of Amman Municipality as well as bakery operators in the capital. This is a new and long awaited trend. It has a meaning: The Jordanian labourer has thus broken the shame barrier and is willing to take up the jobs previously considered socially degrading. Finally we arrive at the obvious conclusion: Work is honourable.

He/she who makes our bread should have the respect of a schoolteacher or a soldier.

However, I was surprised to hear Saleh Khasawneh, a former minister of labour, forecasting a further increase in the volume of non-Jordanians working in the Kingdom. I can't reconcile such a prediction when unemployed Jordanians exceed 150,000 and are ready to accept wages as little as JD80 a month.

On the negative side we notice the complete looseness of the Jordanian labour market, which is virtually wide open to everyone with almost no restrictions. As a matter of fact guest workers do not come to Jordan because they secured job offers or employment contracts, they simply come over to look for jobs. The unemployment rate among guest workers is perhaps higher than the unemployment rate prevailing in the country.

Egyptian, Syrian, and Iraqi workers are of course welcome in Jordan, not only due to pan-Arab considerations, but also because they are producers and hard workers who serve the country's economy and help build it. However, the priority should be for Jordanians. We expect the Gulf states for instance to welcome Jordanian expatriates, but we don't chal-

lenge the fair rule that Gulf workers have priority in obtaining jobs available in their respective countries. All that we hope for in the Gulf labour market is to be the second best, i.e., to be given the priority over Asian labourers, but not over nationals. We should apply the same principle in our own labour market.

There is no sacred rule which allows Egyptians, Syrians, and Iraqis to Jordan any time, work without a permit and stay without a residency permit. It is a given: so much so that the government does not know the exact number of the guest workers, let alone their names, addresses, and nature of the jobs they occupy.

A month ago, the Saudi Arabian minister of labour revealed that the number of Jordanians residing in Saudi Arabia is 107,325. Can the Jordanian minister of labour tell us how many Egyptians, Syrians, or Iraqis work and live in Jordan at a given moment?

So far the case of guest workers has no political dimensions, but it is very important from security, social, and health standpoints. Perhaps the government will rise up to the challenge and regulate the domestic labour market. If it does not act when the unemployment rate is so high, then when?

India's bomb has worrisome roots

By Gwynne Dyer

"NOTHING BETTER could have happened," said Air Chief Marshal N.C. Suri, former head of the Indian Air Force. "It's wonderful. I'm speechless," burbled former defence minister Raja Ramanna. And all across India, hundreds of millions of others shared their joy.

The knots of people gathered around newspapers, the cheering crowds: the scenes in India after its first three nuclear weapons tests in the Thar desert on May 11 were eerily reminiscent of those old photographs of the crowds in European cities that cheered the outbreak of the First World War.

It is India's sovereign right to build and test as many nuclear weapons as it wishes. It is just very, very stupid to exercise that right.

The Chinese (who signed the Test Ban Treaty after one last round of tests in 1996) may not resume testing, because they already have hundreds of operational warheads. But Beijing was alarmed by India's nuclear target planning in China.

Pakistan, whose nuclear weapons have never been tested (it probably has a dozen or so), will probably carry out nuclear tests too before the end of this year. "We are in a headlong arms race on the subcontinent," said Pakistan's Foreign Minister Gohar Ayub, adding: "(the Indians) are more or less saying 'to hell with you'."

That is, unfortunately,

just what the Indian government led by Prime Minister Atal Bihari Vajpayee is saying. Its goal is more to reap the domestic rewards of an aggressively nationalistic policy than to scare the hell out of the neighbours, but actions have consequences. In this case, predicts Indian military analyst Pratul Bidwai, the consequences are "two nuclear arms races: a small one with Pakistan and a big one with China."

These races will be unstable and highly dangerous, more like the terrifying Soviet-American confrontations from the Berlin Airlift (1948) to the Cuban Crisis (1962) than the later, more reliable mutual deterrence of the 70s and 80s.

This is because when the total numbers of nuclear weapons are only in the hundreds (as in the Cold War of the 50s, and in the China-India-Pakistan triangle in the near future), there is a major incentive in a crisis to use them first. A well-directed first strike could cripple the other side's ability to retaliate.

It gets worse. Both Pakistan and India will have highly vulnerable nuclear forces for the foreseeable future — airplanes and immobile land-based missiles — which doubles the incentive to launch a nuclear first strike in a crisis. And the fascist leanings of the current Indian government make crises very likely.

The Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) that leads the present coalition has dropped or denied most of its ultra-nationalist and Hindu supremacist policies during the past year, in order to lure various regional parties into partnership with it. Prime

Minister Vajpayee is the urbane and smiling salesman of the new moderation — but the weapons tests are the policy of the old BJP.

There are other unpleasant BJP policies that may shortly rise from their shallow graves, like a profound hostility to India's Muslim minority that is bound to worsen relations with Pakistan. More generally, the BJP's reflexes are typically fascist, in that it believes that beating the drums about India's military strength and telling the rest of the world to go to hell are the best way to unite and mobilise Indians.

Fascism is a strong word, calling up images of Hitler and the death camps. But the BJP is actually the political wing of a paramilitary organisation, the Rashtriya Swayamsevak Sangh (Association of National Volunteers) or RSS, that was founded in the 20s to do for Indians what its founders believed Mussolini was doing for the Italians.

From the beginning, the RSS evoked a lost golden age of Indian national power and racial purity, and sought to create solidarity by targeting minorities as enemies. India's 50 million Christians and Sikhs come in for their share of abuse, but the main target has always been the 120 million Indian Muslims — the "semitic problem", as the RSS's early leader Madhav Gowalkar put it.

Gowalkar, known to his uniformed followers simply as "the guru", wrote an influential book called "We, or Our Nationhood Defined", in which he had some kind things to say about Hitler. "To keep up the purity of the nation and its culture," Germany

shocked the world by the purging of its semitic race, the Jews. National pride at its highest has been manifested there...."

"The non-Hindu people in India must learn to revere the Hindu religion, must entertain no idea but the glorification of the Hindu nation.... They may stay in the country only subordinated to the Hindu nation, claiming nothing, deserving nothing."

Gowalkar's book is so embarrassing that it has long been out of print, and today's Indian fascists have much smoother spokesmen. But as Madan Das, joint secretary of the RSS, said earlier this year: "The BJP is a creation of the RSS cadre. (Prime Minister) Vajpayee cannot be a moderate. He was born, brought up, and grown in the RSS. He just presents our thoughts differently."

To have such people playing with nuclear weapons is not a happy development for the world, and five tests in a week shows just how much they love them. Indians are right about the hypocrisy of the current nuclear powers, who sign treaties banning the spread of nuclear weapons to new countries while refusing to scrap their own, but you do not cure the sickness by spreading it. Nor do you enhance your own national security by going nuclear.

If and when the bombs fall, Vajpayee and his ministers will doubtless have underground bunkers to hide in, as will their opposite numbers in Pakistan and China. But on that day it will not be much fun out on the streets of Karachi, Wuhan, and Bombay.

Everyone is looking towards a Palestinian state

By James P. Karny

FOR PALESTINIAN President Yasser Arafat, 1999 will be the year of the declaration of the Palestinian state. Not on paper as it was in 1938 in Algeria, but on the ground in the territories under the Palestinian National Authority (PNA). But the Israeli prime minister has warned that it will be a big mistake if the Palestinians unilaterally declare a Palestinian state, and that Israel will take whatever measures it can to thwart the effect of such a move on the ground.

The question now is whether the PNA has any authority to declare a Palestinian state and what are the logical consequences of such a development. First, U.N. General Assembly Resolution No. 3236 in 1974 and resolutions of other international organisations have recognised the right of the Palestinian people to an independent Palestinian state and their right to self-determination. There is also an international consensus about the right of the Palestinian people to have their own state. Second, the Oslo accords and the treaty of Washington had envisioned and prospectively have declared 1999 as the year in which the final status of the Palestinian territories will be decided.

The peace process has stalled because Israel is not agreeing to continue withdrawing from the West

Bank on the premise that the Palestinians are not guaranteeing their security from attacks by "terrorists." A recent U.S. State Department report revealed that the PNA is taking all necessary and reasonable measures to fight "terrorist attacks" and praised Arafat for his efforts to combat any attacks against Israel. The PNA cannot not be forced to do more than the Israelis are doing. If the Israeli government cannot prevent those attacks, can more be expected from the PNA? Israel is using the threats of terrorist attacks as a smoke screen to avoid facing the 1999 deadline, final status of the West Bank and the start of the negotiations on Jerusalem. Therefore the PNA is within its rights and authority to declare a Palestinian state in the territories under its control.

Netanyahu's threats to take measures against any unilateral decision made by the PNA remind us of the Israeli mentality that prevailed during the intifada: Break the Palestinians' bones. This policy has completely failed to prevent the Palestinian people from continuing their struggle and to obtain recognition by Israel and the U.S. of their right to exist, their right as a Palestinian people, and to recognise the PLO and its chairman. This has led to the withdrawal from some of the occupied territories in the West Bank. The same fate will befall such measures taken against the

Palestinian people. Those measures have failed before to dissuade the Palestinians from continuing their struggle and they will fail again.

Similarly, the policy of intimidation and economic sanctions against certain countries and their people has failed consistently in our modern world. Look at the sanctions against Cuba, imposed some 40 years ago, they failed to budge or change Cuba's policies whether it is foreign or domestic. The same arguments apply to Iran, Iraq, and Libya not to mention Vietnam. We should mention that the sanctions against the previous racist regime of South Africa imposed by the majority of the nations of the world did not force the South African regime to change its policy of apartheid for almost 20 years. The same reasoning will apply to China. Fifty years after the establishment of the Communist regime in China, the political structures are still in place. In the Western Hemisphere, we have a misconception that external pressure and economic sanctions and isolation imposed on certain countries will help us establish democratic regimes and liberal economies in those countries. This conception is dead wrong. Not only did it fail, it backfired. How many economic opportunities have been lost because of the embargo imposed that precluded the conclusion of trade and investment agreements? In one word, the

Western societies are in need of countries that they are sanctioning. It is not the sanctions and the will of certain states that will determine the kind of government the people of other countries should have. It is the will of the people of each country that will determine what kind of government or policy that country should have. We have a myth in the West that SDI or some kind of arms race had wiped out the former Soviet Union.

Simply stated any measures Israel will take will not stop the Palestinian people from seeking independence. This is what I noticed from my recent visit to Jerusalem, Haifa, and some major cities in the West Bank. The people there are well aware of their rights and they are not going to give up no matter how hard it is and no matter how long it will take. A 21-year-old man, working as a taxi driver, told me on my way to my hotel "perhaps they can destroy our homes, throw us out, but they will not destroy our dreams, take our rights or weaken our will. I have nothing to lose. Perhaps they vanquished our grandfathers and fathers but can they vanquish my children? We are here to stay and to see the Palestinian flag raised over the capital of our state, Jerusalem." All over the West Bank and among the Arabs of Israel, one word is on the tongue these days, the birth of the Palestinian state.

Amazing, it took the Zionist movement 50 years to create a Jewish state and it will take the Palestinian people 50 years to create their own.

One question remains. Will the Palestinian state benefit other than the Palestinian people. Of course, it will benefit Israel itself. The Palestinians probably will have the Israelis as their first and primary business partners, importers and exporters. The United States will benefit. The Palestinian state is without infrastructure, who else should be called upon to build other than American companies. No longer will the military and financial support for Israel to build, maintain and strengthen its military might be needed. Then the money earmarked will go from supporting means of destruction to means of reconstruction. Finally, a Palestinian state will probably end 50 years of conflict in the Middle East.

Thirty years ago, Golda Meir said: "The Palestinians do not exist. We are the true people of Palestine." If the late prime minister could see what has changed since her death, she would find that she would be shaking the hands with the president of the Palestinian state.

The writer is an attorney based in Anaheim, California in the U.S. He contributed this article to the Jordan Times.

LETTERS

Dark clouds do pass

To the editor:

THE 15TH OF May marks one of humanity's darkest hours. On this day 50 years ago, a dark cloud of human dispersal, grief and bloodletting engulfed the region with the establishment of the "Israeli State" on the sacred land of Islam and on the ruins of scores and scores of Arab towns and villages and signposts to centuries of uninterrupted Arab habitation.

What compounds the tragedy of Palestine — the land of the sanctified mosques, of the sepulchres, of the prophets and saints and martyrs — is that it was a product of the labours, ideas and struggle of those who are descendants of Abraham, Moses, David and Solomon — prophets who taught humanity the sanctity of human life and property, prophets who imparted to humanity the ethic of human dignity through submission to the Creator and His Law.

As much as it is a day that marks the folly of those who think that history and destiny can be made by the barrel of the gun, the unethical exercise of power and the spreading of corruption, it is equally a testament to the decades of endurance, striving and dignified tolerance of affliction which has been the circumstance of so many Palestinians and Jordanians, and Arabs and Muslims. In a crucial sense, also, it is a testament to the tragic consequences and cost to humans when governments and people choose not to confront a challenge to their security, their freedom, their future and their sense of what is right.

In history many a dark cloud that appeared on the horizon of the human condition passed, through the moral resolve of those, who with courage and steadfastness, resisted, endured and overcame, or through the forces of disintegration that God Almighty instills in those whose triumph is at the expense of their soul and the well-being of others.

Khaled Nusseibeh
Amman

The Jordan Times welcomes letters and contributions from its readers on any issue they wish to tackle. Letters intended for publication should contain the writer's full name and preferably address as well. Names can be withheld upon request but only under special circumstances. Letters are subject to editing and abridging.

Fake Mayan

By Fiona Ortiz

Manila

MANILA CITY — Seeking to steal a Mayan slog on the swampy, low-lying jungles of northern Luzon province, carrying a power saw, a team of men went to a remote ruins in this land, they saw ancient Mayan Indian ruins and smuggle them to sell to private collectors.

Manila's culture ministers have ransacked hundreds of Mayan ruins, whose hieroglyphs tell the history of people who flourished before the European conquest. But the looted government, during the 20 years of war that ended in 1945, moved slowly to the Mayan ruins.

They are finding our ruins, and profaning them, so we have initiated a crusade to recuperate these treasures and to put them back where people pay for thousands of dollars for their artifacts," said Minister Augusto Sison. Reuters in Manila.

Sison said arms troops were sent to Peto to a few of the 2,000 Mayan ruins in the area. He also planned a United States with the United States to recover antiquities. Last month the government began a project to be safely housed in a museum while the ruins are being moved.

They are finding the carvings, a beer and cigarette Philip Morris Interna-

monal to recently a \$150,000 copy 50 cent statue — a crushed stone, glass, are a withstand enough for Copying

They profani recupe destru hundre for a Cultu

the original has helped ancient Maya as Palenque a Copan in Honduras. The project carvings from sites of Carls and Aguacate sible by cat near lake Peten from Queen famous Mayan the elabora the three sites, which from 2 will be moved centre in the of Sayaxche on River Vela ment is seeking funding to build um. In the head Pitas and the stelae stood central plazas, each uprigh Mayan space sacrificed

day, May 17, 1998
Fahed Faneh

The Palestinians: Fifty Years Later

Why has the PLO been defeated?

On March 25, 1998 Professor Hisham Sharabi delivered The Kareema Khoury Annual Distinguished Lecture at the Centre for Contemporary Arab Studies of Georgetown University in Washington, D.C. Following is the second part of that lecture which is being reprinted in three parts.

I WAS in Jordan in the wake of the Arab defeat in the 1967 war. I witnessed the emergence of the PLO as the umbrella organisation of the major Palestinian guerrilla groups, including the two most important, the Movement for the Liberation of Palestine (Fatah), an ideologically mixed group headed by Yasser Arafat, and the Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine (PFLP), the major leftist grouping, led by George Habash. In my view, the fate of the PLO was sealed when the leadership of the newly-structured organisation was won by Arafat. For the next 30 years, the PLO was dominated by conservative forces linked to oil-rich Arab regimes and it was shaped by Arafat's patriarchal style and leadership. As for the Palestinian left, it was reduced to a subordinate role, though it continued to enjoy wide support among the intellectuals and the educated youth of the refugee camps.

Had George Habash been elected to the leadership of the PLO, would the organisation have become a genuinely revolutionary movement, which it never was allowed to become under Arafat? It is difficult to tell. Looking back, a left leadership would probably have provided the PLO with the two essential ingredients Arafat, with disastrous consequences, could not provide: a political vision and rational organisation and practice.

In the summer of 1969 I met Habash and Arafat separately, in the western hills of Jordan, where the various guerrilla groups had been encamped after the 1967 war. They could not have been more different — in appearance, personality, education, and intellectual orientation. Habash was a medical doctor in his early forties, a secular Arab nationalist with a Marxist orientation, educated at the American University of Beirut, fluent in English, and a charismatic public speaker. He was a perfect example of the educated, modern, post-World War II Palestinian intellectual. We talked for hours about different subjects, about the current dangerous situation in Jordan, intra-Palestinian factional differences, United States policy, and the programme of the newly-created Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine. Joining us at various points in the discussion were young men and women in khaki uniform, some of whom had recently

crossed the river to join the PFLP. I came back convinced that a revolutionary Palestinian movement had emerged, one capable of mobilising the great human and material potential of the Palestinians and probably of sparking a radical movement across the Arab World.

Arafat was in his late thirties, an architectural engineering graduate of Cairo University and a former successful contractor in Kuwait with strong ties to the Muslim Brothers. He met me warmly, speaking, to my surprise, with an Egyptian dialect. The meeting lasted about an hour during which he amiably spoke on several subjects, giving only vague answers to the many questions I addressed to him. In the years that followed I came to know him quite well, well enough, at any rate, to allow me to make some observations about his style of leadership and its effect on the outcome of Palestinian struggle.

If Habash can be described as a representative of the modern Palestinian intellectual-activist, Arafat would be representative of the opposite model. In many ways, he is a perfect example of the Arab (neo) patriarchal personality, one which is not quite traditional, nor fully modern. As a leader, Arafat reflected all the characteristics of the traditional father: expertise at ceremonial sociability, incompetence at dealing with technical and theoretical issues, inability to delegate power, and the consistent arrogation to himself of functions he is not qualified to handle. This accounts for his grave failure in mobilising Palestinian talent and for the reduction early on of the PLO to an ineffective bureaucratic structure. In all his appointments, considerations of personal loyalty and blind obedience are more important than the qualities of competence and effectiveness. This is partly why the PLO, like most Arab patriarchal regimes, could not face up to Israel's modern instrumental rationality. In the modern world, patriarchy, as a social system, is ultimately dysfunctional; the only system more dysfunctional than patriarchy is neopatriarchy.

In retrospect, it is difficult to understand not only how Mr. Arafat could have survived all the mistakes he kept committing, but how he was never able to learn from these mistakes — tragic mistakes, as for example, the horrifying way in which the lives of thousands of young men and women were for years repeatedly sacrificed in the same so-called commando operations against Israel that almost invariably ended in disaster, making it easier for the Israelis to portray the Palestinian guerrillas as terrorists.

The Madrid peace process initiated in 1991

produced what Arafat had dreaded most; the emergence of an alternative Palestinian leadership. The distinguished Palestinian negotiating team headed by Dr. Haidar Abdul-Shafi projected an image of Palestinians as rational, practical, and articulate in sharp contrast with the image of Arafat and his group. He had every reason to fear Abdul-Shafi, a respected physician, who looked like Mandela, with an impeccable political record and a long history of struggle, and who would have probably played a leadership role in Palestine had he been allowed to remain in the public eye. But Arafat's secret Oslo agreement not only enabled him to pull the rug out from under Abdul-Shafi and his team, but to put himself firmly back in the saddle. Duly elected chairman of the Palestinian Authority in 1995, he emerged more powerful than ever. Now formally recognised by the international community as the democratically elected spokesman of the Palestinian people, he had the power to agree to any condition acceptable to Israel, and to validate any final settlement simply by affixing his signature to it.

In the eyes of many Palestinians, Mr. Arafat today represents the gravest threat to the cohesiveness, security, and national well-being of the Palestinian people.

But Mr. Arafat will not last forever. In the next few years, as the older Palestinian generation dies out and the younger generation takes over, fundamental changes are likely to take place in the political organisation and goals of the Palestinian people in regard to action within Israel itself, within the West Bank and Gaza, and within the Palestinian diaspora.

What form will these changes take in each of the three arenas of future Palestinian action?

Within Israel, where political action will focus more and more on equality and civil rights, the younger educated generation entering political life will shed the traditional ethnic and religious ties that were carefully cultivated by the Israeli administration since 1948 to divide the Palestinians, and begin to participate fully in Israeli political life as Israeli citizens with equal rights. As Palestinians become more integrated politically and economically, they will be in a position not only to influence significantly the outcome of national elections, but also to have an input in political decision-making. As a distinct political force, they will be able to enhance their effectiveness by forging alliances with the progressive and secular forces in Israel. There is little doubt that a prosperous, cohesive Palestinian community in Israel, as it acquires political power commensurate with its size, will bolster Palestinian

identity and transform the Palestinians in Israel into important players in Palestinian and Arab affairs.

In the West Bank and Gaza, the failure of the peace process has revealed Israel's structural inability to accept a solution to the Arab-Israeli conflict based on the United Nations resolutions and international consensus. The reason for this is that both the U.N. resolutions and the international consensus are predicated on the partition of Palestine. Both the former Rabin Labour government and the present Netanyahu Likud government sought to get around a partition solution by offering different formulas based instead on separation. While Rabin's formula was based on a streamlined version of the South African bantustan model with limited self-rule in the guise of a Palestinian state, Netanyahu's plan is based on an antiquated apartheid model with local autonomy but without even a vestige of statehood. Thus, the disagreement between Labour and Likud is not over substance, as the mainstream media maintains, for both reject partition, but over a politically correct way of segregating the Palestinians within a framework that will preserve Israel's hegemony over all of Palestine.

If this is a correct description of the situation, and I think it is, then the central question is, what action can the Palestinians take in dealing with it?

The Palestinians have three options: accepting the status quo, opposing the status quo, or engaging in long-term struggle against it.

The first option, which some Palestinians consider the most realistic option, is based on the belief that the Oslo peace process offers the best chance to establish a foothold in Palestine, which could be transformed into a political entity that could in time become a state. This view bases itself on the experience of decolonization, particularly Tunisia's where acceptance of limited autonomy eventually led to independence, the dismantling of the colonies themselves, and the eventual repatriation of the colonists. This view ignores the fact that in Palestine radically different conditions obtain, most significantly, the fact that there is no mother country to which the Jewish settlers may one day be repatriated, and that the settlements in time will only continue to increase and expand.

The second option is reformist opposition to the existing regime in the West Bank and Gaza. Its goal would be to reform the Palestinian Authority and expand Palestinian autonomy, along the lines being attempted today by various groups and organisations in Palestin-

ian civil society. In this reformist movement, the Palestinian Legislative Council, or at least certain members and groupings within it, could play an important role, firstly, protecting those democratic structures that still exist in Palestinian political life, and secondly, preparing, when the time comes, for the orderly transition of power, and the replacement of the present patriarchal regime with a democratic one.

The third and probably most important option — and the one likely to be central in the next phase — is long-term national struggle to end Israel's occupation of the West Bank and Gaza, restore Arab and Muslim Jerusalem, dismantle the Jewish settlements, and establish an independent Palestinian state alongside the state of Israel.

What form would the struggle option take? It would claim the right to all legitimate forms of struggle, from non-violent forms of resistance to classical forms of armed struggle. From a political point of view, however, non-violent struggle is probably the more effective one in the long run. Yet, if the present conditions of repression and humiliation continue, wide-scale violence could prove to be the more likely option. Opting for national struggle is bound to enhance uncontrollable individual acts of self-sacrifice, the ultimate power of the powerless.

Popular resistance, which is likely to bring back the intifada, will simultaneously lead to building alliances and grassroots organisations, like the ones that emerged spontaneously in the early days of the original intifada (which was snuffed out by the PLO leadership in Tunisia). If this succeeds by the turn of the century, this new post-patriarchal liberation struggle will regain the human face of the first intifada and win the support of progressive forces the world over, including the support of progressive Jewish forces in Israel and the United States.

In the next phase of struggle, a heavy responsibility will fall upon the shoulders of the diaspora Palestinians, the largest group of Palestinians. This group will have to carry out the task of putting together the financial and administrative structures necessary for extending all kinds of support to the Palestinians in Israel, the West Bank, and Gaza, and in the diaspora as well, in economic aid, educational and social assistance, and broad political support.

Sharabi is a Professor of European Intellectual History and Omar Mukhtar Professor of Arab Culture at Georgetown University.

Fake Mayan carvings aim to foil thieves

By Fiona Ortiz
Reuters

GUATEMALA CITY — Thieves seeking to steal Guatemala's history slog through the swampy, low-land jungles of northern Peten province, carrying gas-fuelled power saws, weapons to intimidate guards and cash to bribe them.

At remote ruins in this roadless land, they saw away ancient Mayan Indian carvings and smuggle them abroad to sell to private collectors.

Guatemala's culture ministry says looters have ransacked thousands of Mayan graves and ruined hundreds of carvings whose hieroglyphics tell the history of a people who flourished centuries before the European conquest. But the cash-strapped government, recovering from 36 years of civil war that ended in 1996, is moving slowly to protect the Mayan ruins.

"They are stealing our history and profaning sacred sites, so we have initiated a crusade to recuperate those treasures and to destroy the international market where people pay hundreds of thousands of dollars for our artefacts," Culture Minister Augusto Vela told Reuters in an interview.

Vela said army troops have been sent to Peten to guard a few of the 2,000 known Mayan ruins in the region. He also praised a year-old agreement with the United States that makes it easier for Guatemala to recover smuggled antiquities.

And last month the government began a project to copy carvings. The originals will be safely housed in a local museum while replicas will remain at the ruins to foil thieves.

Copying the carvings
Food, beer and cigarette giant Philip Morris Interna-

tional Inc. announced recently it would provide \$150,000 to Guatemala to copy 50 carvings known as stelae — tall stones covered with hieroglyphics and usually a ruler's portrait.

The copies, made of crushed stone and fibreglass, are hardy enough to withstand vandalism, light enough for easy transport. Copying stelae and storing

human captives on round altar stones.

The stunning carvings show proud, warlike rulers. At Dos Pilas, a huge stela shows the power of a king in jaguar-pelt boots, standing above the naked, trussed-up body of jaguar paw, the lord of a neighbouring city that had been vanquished.

At Ceibal a stela shows the proud profile of a king

"Last year one of our guards confronted them and they killed him. These pillagers don't respect anything," Vela said.

At Aguateca and other sites, visitors can see rude, pale scars on the stelae where robbers have clearly sawed off two-inch-thick pieces from the surface, carrying away the carvings and leaving the heavy stone behind.

In Ceibal last year, robbers snatched one of three carved crouching monkeys that held up a famous round altar.

With a bilateral cultural patrimony agreement signed in 1997 with the United States, Guatemala hopes to diminish the international market for stolen carvings. Martin Sullivan, chair of the U.S. Cultural Property Advisory Committee, said the agreement gives Guatemala a strong legal position to try to recover items that have been smuggled into the United States.

Since the agreement was signed, Vela said, Guatemala has recovered 500 valuable pieces from the United States. He also hopes the accord will help Guatemala recover more than 100 Maya carvings and pottery that were put on display recently at Boston's Museum of Fine Arts.

Vela said experts from Guatemala have concluded the pieces were smuggled out of Guatemala in violation of local laws, and Sullivan said the agreement may put pressure on museums to investigate the origin of private collections more carefully before putting them on display.

Sullivan said it was better for original stelae and other Maya cultural materials to be displayed in context in the Peten rather than in a museum. "When taken out of context it becomes more difficult to see the historical associations,"

King's address at banquet in honour of Swiss president

(Continued from page 1)

were before. But we will try and will also strive. Today has also given us an opportunity to welcome your host yesterday, President Arafat. I assured him of our continued support for him and for the organisation he heads as well as for the Palestinians. We were pleased with the way they have shown every positive indication towards the peace process, particularly their response to the American initiative and their acceptance of that initiative. We have expressed our support for it and we hope that things will move in the right direction in the near future because our war is against despair. Why should the United States be with us? Because we have chosen it to be a sponsor of the peace process along with Russia. The peace process has started in Madrid on the basis of U.N. Resolutions 242 and 338, land for peace and of course the Palestinians were under our umbrella and now they

are able to move forward and reach an agreement which was ratified.

Then we have the Hebron agreement and I believe that the major power of the world is responsible for policies that give people the opportunity to create. I hope that the Americans will stand as they did in the peace agreement between Egypt and Israel and saved the situation when they stood by the Egyptians. And I hope the current case will be so, and that despair and anger will vanish. We hope to see something that has been missing: mutual respect, mutual understanding and an attempt to change the quality of life of people in order to live and enjoy peace. We will exert all our efforts to achieve this end. As far as my family is concerned, and its associations with your country, they date back to Faisal I, my late mother, ... and my father. I have travelled since my childhood to many places and have certain things to memorise such as my visit to Switzer-

land and I hope I can pay a visit to this dear country again.

Thank you

Following are excerpts from the address of Swiss President Fabio Cotti during the banquet:

Your Majesty,

You already mentioned, and we all know, the distinguished historical relations between your family and our country. They are close friendship relations. When I became president of my country in 1991, I have not visited any country except Jordan. I want to express my cordial feelings towards your country. And I want to say that this friendship cannot remain a symbolic element but it should be enhanced further through various means. Our deep discussions will lead towards better cooperation. As for Jordan, it is a friend, and we will try to extend our best to assist other countries. This visit is a

sign of respect for your country's faith in democratic values and this is the reason for escorting a parliamentary delegation with me. We respect your faith towards a market economy. Also accompanying us is a leading businessmen delegation to hold talks with their Jordanian counterparts. I want to say that human intelligence will be the only winner at the end and that peace will be attained in the region. I would like to say, that during my visit to Petra with Her Majesty Queen Noor, we heard some Israeli tourists chanting and singing a peace song, and what I concluded is that people want peace and that their representatives also want peace.

Your Majesty, if Switzerland can in any possible means help in this regard, we will do so.

I want to thank you and your people for your warm welcome and generosity.

British foreign secretary cancels Turkey visit — report

ANKARA (AFP) — British Foreign Secretary Robin Cook has called off a planned visit to Turkey due to ongoing differences on how to improve ties between Ankara and the European Union (EU), the Turkish media reported Saturday.

Ties between Ankara and the European Union have been frozen since last December after EU leaders excluded Turkey from their expansion plans.

Mr. Cook's visit to Ankara next Tuesday, which was aimed at giving a fresh boost to relations and preparing for a Turkish-EU association meeting later this month, was announced here last Monday.

Yuzyl and the news television channel NTV said the trip would not take place, as Turkey was planning to boycott the May 25 association council meeting in protest at the EU's policy toward Ankara.

A Turkish foreign ministry official was unable to confirm or deny the reports and British embassy officials here were not available for comment.

At a summit meeting in Luxembourg in December, EU leaders excluded Turkey from the bloc's enlargement plans in the foreseeable future while deciding to launch accession talks with 11 other European countries.

Angered by the decision, Ankara moved to suspend all political dialogue with the Union, saying EU membership was no longer a top

priority. Turkey has mainly blamed its arch rival Greece and Germany for the deterioration of ties.

Efforts by France and Britain, two of the EU nations closest to the Turkish position, to calm Ankara down have failed amid a continued Greek veto on EU economic aid to Turkey.

Financial aid worth over

two billion euros over the next several years, constantly vetoed by Greece, was part of a customs union agreement which took effect in 1996 to boost trade between Turkey and the EU.

The Turkish-EU association council meeting would be the two sides' first high-level talks since December.

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Khalaf, senior officials brief Swiss delegation on Jordan's economy, investment opportunities

AMMAN (Petra) — Planning Minister Rima Khalaf met Saturday a Swiss delegation of businessmen and discussed with them prospects of economic and industrial cooperation.

Dr. Khalaf also expressed Jordan's interest in benefiting from Switzerland's expertise in encouraging small and medium-size industrial projects.

The delegation, accompanying Swiss president Flavio Corti, discussed with Dr. Khalaf Swiss aid to help Jordan's cement

mining, agricultural, garment, furniture, drug and other industries.

Yusef Mansour, head of the technical unit at the Ministry of Planning, briefed the businessmen about the Jordanian national economy and the ministry's future plans.

The members of the delegation expressed interest in investing in Jordan noting that the Jordanian-Swiss economic agreement provides for such joint ventures.

The Swiss delegation

also held talks with Haidar Murad, the chairman of the Federation of Jordanian Chambers of Commerce, and Jordanian businessmen to discuss economic and trade links between Jordan and Switzerland.

Mr. Murad briefed the guests on new Jordanian laws which encourage investments and provide incentives and privileges to investors.

He told the visitors that the trade exchange between the two countries last year amounted to JD64

million with Switzerland exporting JD 63 million worth of goods to the Kingdom.

Mr. Murad urged Switzerland to buy Jordanian national products in order to adjust the balance of trade.

The chairman of the federation also discussed with the delegation ways for promoting economic links between the two sides.

The directors of the Free Zones Corporation, the Investment Promotion Corporation and the Jordan

Industrial Estates Corporation explained at the meeting the areas where investments can be made and called for more Swiss investments in Jordan and more facilities for Jordanian products to enter Swiss markets.

The delegation expressed Switzerland's readiness to provide backing to the Jordanian industries to enable them to export to Switzerland and help adjust the balance of trade between the two countries.

G-7 urges IMF to publish country warnings

BIRMINGHAM, England (AFP) — The Group of Seven (G-7) leading industrial nations Friday urged the IMF to publish more information about member countries, including any causes for concern in their economies.

G-7 heads of state and government said they attached "particular importance" to "encouraging the IMF to publish more information about its members and their policies, including its concerns about members' policy making and vulnerabilities."

There have been calls for the International Monetary Fund (IMF) to make public warnings about problems in member countries' economies as part of moves to prevent a recurrence of the Asian crisis.

But there have also been fears that publishing such information could precipitate the kind of crisis it is designed to avoid.

The IMF has hitherto only given such warnings in private.

The G-7 leaders said the Asian financial crisis had revealed "potential weaknesses and vulnerabilities in the global financial system."

They called for a new framework "to ensure that the private sector plays a timely and appropriate role in the resolution of financial crises."

They said the IMF should also publish more information about its own decision-making process, and said its policy-making Interim Committee should be developed "to permit a deeper and more effective dialogue."

Jordan plans to rally support for WTO membership

By Ghaila Alul
Jordan Times Staff Reporter

AMMAN — Jordan plans to rally support for its accession to the 132-member World Trade Organisation (WTO) at an upcoming ministerial meeting in Geneva, an official said Saturday.

Jordan, which has applied to join the WTO, enjoys an observer status at the Geneva meeting which will discuss the future agenda of the organisation and commemorate the anniversary of the establishment of the multilateral trade system [or the signing of the General Agreement on Tariffs and Trade (GATT) in Switzerland]. Tamam Ghoul, director of the coordination office of negotiations with the WTO told the Jordan Times.

"It is important for Jordan, being a negotiating country, to rally support for the WTO members participating in the conference," Ms. Ghoul said.

In an unprecedented step, Arab and Muslim countries — currently negotiating

accession to the WTO — will submit two separate statements to the conference urging the organisation to grant them treatment no less favourable than that accorded to the rest of the members, said Ms. Ghoul.

Jordan concluded its first formal round of negotiations with the WTO last July following an inaugural round in October 1996 when the Kingdom submitted a detailed memorandum to the organisation's members describing the country's economic situation with special emphasis on trade issues.

According to Ms. Ghoul, the next round of negotiations between Jordan and the WTO will take place in Geneva during the last week of July.

As a WTO member, Jordan will have to abide by certain conditions binding to all members. These include forms of non-discrimination clauses such as the "most favoured nation" (MFN) and the "national treatment" clause.

According to a WTO state-

ment, the MFN condition commits all members to grant products of other members treatment no less favourable than that accorded to the products of any other country.

Consequently, no country is to give special trading advantages to another or to discriminate against it. All are on an equal basis and all share the benefits of any moves toward lower trade barriers.

The statement adds that the most favoured nation treatment generally ensures that developing countries and others with little economic leverage are able to benefit freely from the best trading conditions wherever and whenever they are negotiated.

Ms. Ghoul indicated that the "national treatment" clause commits all members to treat incoming goods no less favourably than the equivalent locally produced goods.

She said that Jordan will also have to abide by a tariff binding condition which commits members to observe their tariffs and not raise them in the future.

According to officials, Jordan should accelerate the implementation of Intellectual Property Rights (IPR) rules before it can join the WTO.

Jordan last month succeeded in averting plans by the United States Trade Representative (USTR) to put the Kingdom on a "Priority Watch" list of countries violating adequate protection of intellectual property rights.

The decision not to place Jordan on the "Priority Watch" list followed talks in Washington where Jordan and the U.S. reviewed plans by the Kingdom to implement copyrights, patent and trademark legislation.

However, according to the Pharmaceutical Research and Manufacturers of America (PhRMA), Jordan will be subject to what was termed an "out-of-cycle review" where progress on Jordan's plan to start implementing internationally acceptable IPR rules will be evaluated during the course of this year.

The USTR last year placed

Jordan on a special "301 Watch list" citing inadequate intellectual property protection for pharmaceuticals and other intellectual property-sensitive industries such as computer software and video games.

Jordan's 16 drug manufacturers, whose exports topped \$140 million last year, want the Kingdom not to show flexibility when negotiating a grace period for adjustment with the WTO regulations.

Under the association agreement signed between Jordan and the European Union to create a free trade area by the year 2010, Jordan was granted a grace period of three years to implement IPR rules.

Jordan is one of 31 countries currently negotiating to join the organisation's 132 members. The Arab countries that have already joined the WTO are Kuwait, Qatar, Egypt, Morocco, Tunisia, Mauritania, the United Arab Emirates, Djibouti and Bahrain.

Jordanian fair in Gaza described as 'major success'

By Mahmoud Masharqah
Special to the Jordan Times

GAZA — The six-day Jordanian trade fair which concluded in Gaza Thursday has been described by both Jordanian and Palestinian officials and businessmen as a major success.

According to the organisers, the Jordanian Trade Association (JTA), many of the 40 Jordanian firms which displayed samples of their products at the fair concluded contracts with Palestinian importers to purchase Jordanian products.

The contracts are for foodstuffs, chemical detergents, electrical appliances, construction materi-

als, ready-made garments and textile products, cement, gas ovens, and refrigerators, according to JTA Director Halim Abu Rahmeh.

Underlining the fair as a major step for opening markets for Jordanian products in Palestine, Mr. Abu Rahmeh described the Palestinian markets as promising and hoped that the Palestinian importers will buy their products from Jordan in increased quantities due to their high quality.

Noting that the trade exchange between Jordan and Palestine at present does not exceed JD50 million annually, he expressed optimism that the fair will serve as a catalyst to increase the volume of trade exchange, especially as the

Jordanian products are very competitive in quality and price and quite popular with Palestinian consumers.

JTA Chairman Bassam Saket stressed that the Palestinian market is very important for Jordan and hoped that the Palestinians will give preference to Jordanian goods over the Israeli products.

He expressed hope that Jordan and Palestine will overcome the Israeli obstacles hindering bilateral trade exchanges and that the Palestinians will free themselves from Israel's economic dominance.

Zakariya Agha, member of the Palestine Liberation Organisation's executive council who

opened the trade fair deputising for President Arafat, emphasised that Jordan and Palestine complement each other economically.

He added that the Palestine National Authority hopes that the economies of both sides will be integrated and that the Palestinian markets will be free from Israel's economic hegemony and monopoly.

Munir Mubayadin who represented the Jordan Cement Factories Company at the fair, pointed out that the Palestinian markets are in dire need of the Jordanian cement in view of the huge construction programme going on in the Palestinian territories.

Mr. Mubayadin said Jordan and

the Palestinian National Authority are currently trying to change the "back-to-back" cement delivery system to a "door-to-door" system so as to prevent the wastage of cement in the present transportation process.

A Housing Bank representative at the fair said the bank is striving to bolster Jordanian-Palestinian economic and trade cooperation noting that the Housing Bank now has four branches in the West Bank and the Gaza Strip to contribute to the implementation of development projects.

He said the bank has been providing loans for Palestinian tourist, agricultural, construction and industrial projects.

HOROSCOPE

FORECAST FOR SUNDAY, MAY 17, 1998

By Linda C. Black, Tribune Media Service

ARIES: (March 21 to April 19) If you've been thinking about an old friend, make the call. If this person lives a distance, perhaps you could meet halfway. If you have a mutual friend anywhere near that point, you've got the makings of a great party. Here's your excuse to get the whole gang together again!

TAURUS: (April 20 to May 20) Someone who outranks you wants to tell you what to do. You have strong opinions, and it's important for this person to understand how you feel. You may have to go along with what he or she wants, but at least the final decision will be an informed one.

GEMINI: (May 21 to June 21) This is a wonderful day for an excursion. If you could make it a scientific excursion, even better. One friend of yours, a wildly adventurous type, would love to go along. He or she may inspire you to do a few things even farther out than you've ever tried before.

CANCER: (June 22 to July 21) Your shopping tour today could consist of quite a bit of research. Not to worry. It's the perfect time for it. Don't decide too early, either. It looks like you may discover something this afternoon that will make a big difference in your choice.

LEO: (July 22 to August 21) People will have firm opinions on both sides today. Might as well expect an argument, especially if you're going to visit an older person, such as one of your parents. No point in getting antagonistic. It's the differences that keep your relationship interesting, remember?

VIRGO: (August 22 to September 22) Have you got a stack of magazines to read? How about all those letters you've been meaning to answer? Or that new computer programme you're planning to install? All those projects you have lying around the house will be easier now, so get going.

LIBRA: (September 23 to October 22) You're in a decisive mood, but that doesn't mean you'll be unopposed. You'll have to get your mate's agreement if you're planning to buy something expensive. Don't give up if your scheme is rejected at first. Just put together a better presentation and try again.

SCORPIO: (October 23 to November 21) It looks like your house needs rearranging. You'll be amazed at how creative you get once you're into the project. Are going to feng shui the whole place, or what? That's not a bad idea. Might as well have everything you can, including the vibes, working in your favour.

SAGITTARIUS: (November 22 to December 21) You're in learning mode today. Start by tackling an annoying work-related problem. Get a book or two on the subject. You should have some sort of breakthrough by late afternoon or evening. For the rest of the night you can bask in the glory of having solved the puzzle.

CAPRICORN: (December 22 to January 20) You may not be able to afford travel right now. Not to worry. This is only a temporary condition. You'll have more work and more income very soon. Besides, it looks like a private setting is more conducive to romance. Or maybe a phone call to distant friends will do in place of a visit.

AQUARIUS: (January 21 to February 19) Somebody near and dear to you is arguing with just about everything you say. Hang in there. You're just about to come up with some fabulous new examples to prove your point. You'll be so charming, the two of you may break down in giggles. It's worth a try!

PISCES: (February 20 to March 20) Are you starting to chafe under the yoke of a stifling bureaucracy? There might be something you can do about it. Stop by the library or consult a knowledgeable friend and figure a way to wiggle through without getting tangled up any further.

Birthstone of May: Emerald — Citrine

THE Daily Crossword Edited by Wayne Robert Williams

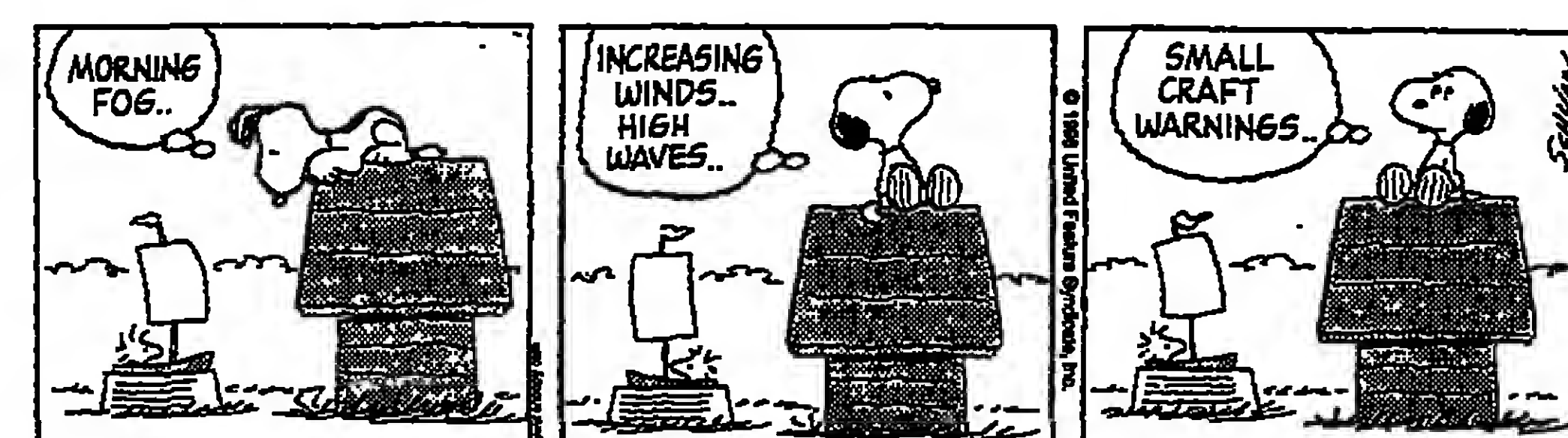
ACROSS

- Salons
- Israel's Meir
- Sam Brown's accountant
- Smart guy?
- Seething
- Once more
- Divan
- Aquarium fish
- Brainstorm
- Child star from Texas?
- Outpouring of gossip
- Ankara
- Miss neighbor
- Mao — Tung
- Majesty
- Club for Tiger
- "Leave it to Beaver" co-star from Texas?
- Aaron
- Spelling's daughter
- Letters in much e-mail
- Show devotion
- Barbara
- Starkey's role as a Texan?
- Shooter
- Rear appendage
- More fraught with danger
- Approval
- Hall of U.S.
- Attorney's dep.
- Honey-and-nut paste
- Actress from Texas?
- Frosted
- Lab containers
- Nat's property
- Slush follower?
- Follow after
- Really stink
- Tennis units
- Make another attempt
- Stance further

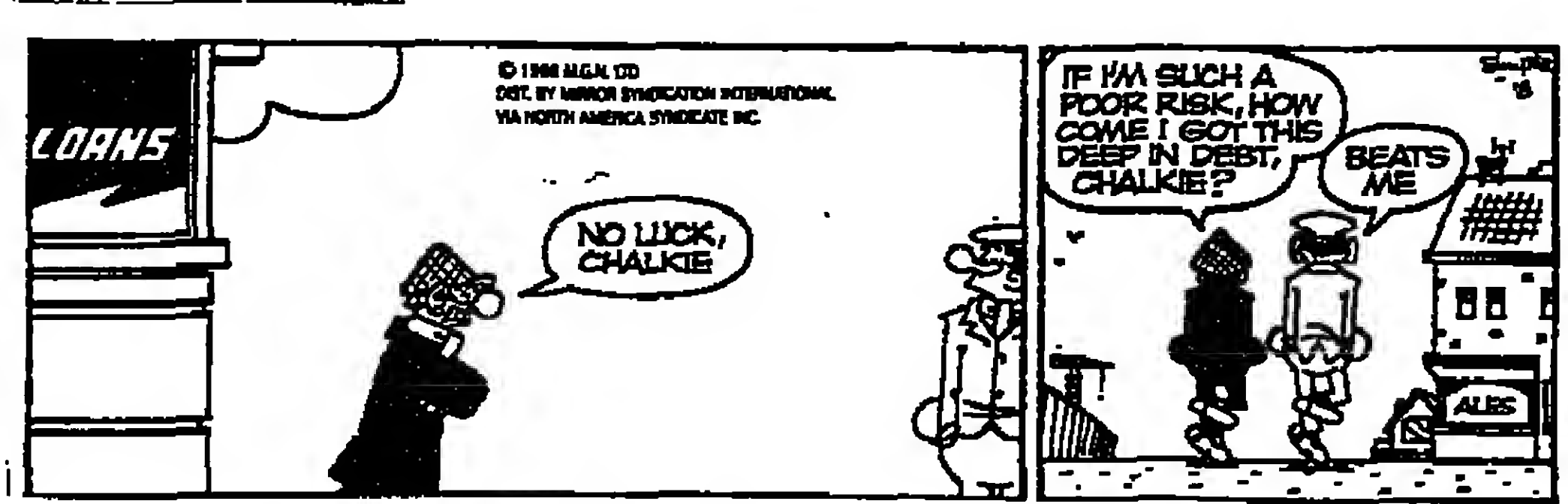
DOWN

- Low-slung hound
- Oahu hellos
- Shoot again
- Table runner
- Type of table
- Follow orders
- Senate Majority Leader Trent
- More fraught with danger
- Tree-lined promenade
- Security money
- Purposeful undertaking
- Marvin or Remick
- H. Hughes'
- Car wash
- Humdinger
- Macho Pichu locale
- Singer Horne
- Pretextually creative
- Herring's kin
- Gr. warship
- Greenlin
- Sword handle
- Songstress
- Fitzgerald
- Recipe abbr.
- Of the ear
- Occupant
- Loaf about
- Finished
- Buckingham of Fleetwood Mac
- vera
- Concurred
- Hirsute
- Jabirus and marabous
- Picking liquid
- Marine starter?
- Chances
- Near or far follower
- Disparaging remark
- Contingencies
- Pot stick

Peanuts



Andy Capp



Mutt'n'Jeff



THE BETTER HALF. By Glasbergen



JUMBLE. THAT SCRAMBLED WORD GAME

Unscramble these four Jumbles, one letter to each square, to form four ordinary words.

FEASH

LUKKS

JITNEC

ALFACI

Answer: IT WAS

Yesterday's Jumble: DRAMA BROOD ALBINO TONGUE
Answer: Needed on a horse-drawn wedding carriage — A BRIDE AND GROOM

Busine

Daily

A review of

Yarmouk Insurance to raise capital wh

REUTERS

The Business

Currency	USD	GBP	JPY
US Dollar	1.0000	0.6460	106.40
DE Mark	0.5968	1.0000	163.75
GB Sterling	1.6225	1.0000	163.75
CH Franc	0.6729	1.2814	1.0000
JP Yen	0.0074	1.2337	1.0000
CA Dollar	0.6905	1.2916	1.0000
IT Lira	0.0006	1.0177	1.0000
NL Guilder	0.4973	0.9368	1.0000
FR Franc	0.1467	0.2994	1.0000

Oil	Last	Today
Brent	14.37	14.33
N. Texas	14.47	14.11
Bonny	14.37	14.33
Dubai	13.15	12.77
U.S. Gas	158.00	158.00

Metal	Bid	Offer
Gold (oz's)	301	301.5
Silver (oz's)	5.57	5.6
Platinum (oz's)	404.9	406.9
AL (3 Months)	1270	1274
Cu (3 Months)	1736	1740
Zn (3 Months)	1070	1074
Lead (3 Months)	546	549
Ni (3 Months)	4970	5000

Commodity	Last	Change
Coffee (c/bis)	132.92	Down
Cocoa (\$/ton)	2027	Down
Sugar (\$/ton)	271.9	Down
Soy (c/bis)	93	Down
Wheat (\$/bush)	28.25	Down
Barley (\$/bush)	118	Down
Rice (\$/ton)	410	Down

JORDAN

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Daily Beat

A review of news from the Arabic Press

Yarmouk Insurance and Reinsurance Company to raise capital while keeping merger option open

THE YARMOUK Insurance and Reinsurance Company intends to complete the procedures for raising its capital in implementation of a previous decision by the general assembly and in order to fulfill the requirement of the insurance law. The company has opted for increasing the capital following unsuccessful negotiations held during the second half of 1997 for a merger with another insurance company.

Although the company is still open for any other possible merger, it is now awaiting the approval of the Jordan Securities Commission to approve a private subscription for present shareholders to buy 500,000 shares. The company will also capitalise JD500,000 of voluntary reserves by awarding the shareholders free bonus shares.

Board chairman Awni Saket told the general assembly that the insurance market is in a critical situation and that the reserves of the companies were exhausted in order to raise the capital. He indicated that the primary market was not favourable last year hoping that the conditions would improve. Mr. Saket went on to say that new regulations may be issued soon requiring the capital of insurance companies to be raised to JD5 million. "This will undoubtedly force the companies to renew merger negotiations that were not successful in the past."

Mr. Saket said that the stiff competition among companies has caused insurance rates to decline in order to attract premiums. "This path was avoided by the com-

pany because of the possible bad consequences," he emphasised. As such, the company's premiums last year dropped and the investments at the stock exchange were all well due to the fall in share prices. Mr. Saket told the shareholders.

According to the annual report, the company's total premiums earned last year amounted to JD2.03 million compared to JD2.80 million in 1996. The marine department posted a JD33,400 net earning compared to JD81,900 in 1996. The net earnings of the fire and the general accidents departments were JD44,400 and JD18,800 respectively (JD45,300 and JD17,900 in 1996).

The losses were recorded by the vehicle and health insurance departments for JD58,600 (JD161,700) and JD18,500 (JD9,060) respectively. Life insurance liabilities amounted to JD141,100 whereas the earnings totalled JD56,300. Overall, the company registered a JD95,900 loss last year compared to a JD28,300 profit in 1996.

The report showed assets totalling JD4.1 million of which JD2.3 million were the company's securities portfolio.

Mr. Saket concluded by assuring the shareholders that the company will strive to share production without going into unsound competition. He said the company will also study and execute fruitful investment projects similar to the (company's) building which is expected to yield a 12 per cent annual return as most of the premises were leased (Al Ra'i + Al Dustour + Al Arab Al Yawn).

Jordan's AFM rated Arab World's biggest gainer

RIYADH (AFP) — Jordan's stock market posted the biggest gains in the Arab World this week, climbing 6.5 per cent, as Kuwait's bourse took the worst tumble, dropping 2.7 per cent, a specialist financial institute said Saturday.

The Amman Financial Market index, which had dropped slightly the previous week, posted a 6.5 per cent gain to end the week at 179.95 points, according to the Saudi-based Bakheet

Financial Advisors, which monitors 11 regional stock markets.

The Jordanian index was pulled up by strong performances by Arab Bank and Housing Bank for the week ending Friday. Bakheet said.

Meanwhile, the Kuwaiti bourse, the Arab World's second largest and which had shown strong gains for the past two weeks, plunged 2.7 per cent to 2,273.90. Bakheet attributed the fall to investor concerns over the

government's economic reform plans.

In Morocco, where the Casablanca Stock Exchange (CSE) index continued its upward trend, climbing 4.5 per cent to end the week at 833.35 points.

The stock market gained two per cent the previous week, and has gained 24.9 per cent since the start of the year.

The report said the CSE surged as investors' demands rose on expectations of increased earnings by leading companies.

The Saudi market, the most highly capitalised in the Arab World, continued its recovery for a fifth consecutive week, with the National Centre for Financial and Economic Information (NCFEI) index moving up 4.2 per cent to 189.44 points.

The Saudi gains, inspired by a surge in stock prices for the petrochemical giant Saudi State Basic Industries Corporation (SABIC) and for electricity companies, almost completed the market's recovery.

The NCFEI is now just 3.2 per cent below its level at the beginning of the year.

Following the three top gainers, Bahrain's BSE index rose 2.7 per cent to 2,124.44 points in trading dominated by banking shares.

Tunisia's BVM index jumped 0.3 per cent to 462.83, while the Palestinian Jerusalem index increased 0.2 per cent to 163.12 points.

Lebanon's BLOM index remained unchanged from the previous week's end at 1,088.10 points.

Other markets in the Arab World took a downward turn, the report said.

Qatar's DSM index slipped 0.1 per cent to 118.66 after no change the previous week.

Egypt's stock market took a sharper tumble with its ESE General Index falling 1.7 per cent to 381.86, and Oman's MSM index dropped 1.9 per cent to 387.07 in trading over banking and investment shares.

AMMAN FINANCIAL MARKET
HOUSING BANK CENTER AMMAN - JORDAN
6 - TELEPHONE: 627277 / 627119
ORGANIZED MARKET SEATTLE PRICE LIST FOR SATURDAY 16/05/1998

PAST 12 MONTHS HIGH	PAST 12 MONTHS LOW	COMPANY'S NAME	P / E	DIV.	NO. OF SHARES	NO. OF TRADS.	VALUE TRADED JD	OPEN PRICE	CLOSE PRICE	CHANGE
S 355.500	170.000	ARAB BANK	16.8	.98	197	3950	803243	199.00	205.00	6.00
2.240	1.600	JOR. NATIONAL BK.	14.1	4.25	37	16367	28297	1.71	1.73	.02
3.540	1.250	BANK OF JORDAN	12.6	0.00	5	2450	3261	1.32	1.34	.02
1.350	.880	MID-EAST DEV. BK.	62.4	0.00	5	12500	11960	.99	.95	-.04
2.680	1.600	INDUSTRIAL DEV. BK.	8.2	6.81	1	2252	3600	1.60	1.60	.00
S 6.280	4.730	THE HOUSING BK.	20.3	1.12	152	80087	517473	6.25	6.41	.16
S 4.120	1.790	JOR. INVESTMENT BANK	9	2.68	4	540	1048	1.97	1.99	.02
920	990	JOR. CULP BANK	4.3	9.72	53	206150	147385	.69	.72	.03
S 4.190	2.670	ARAB TR. INV. BK.	50.8	0.00	1	300	750	2.47	2.50	.03
S 4.020	1.740	JOR. ISLAMIC BANK	18.9	0.00	12	4661	8527	1.82	1.85	.03
1.400	.800	HEIT AL-HAL (SETTNA)	4.6	0.00	12	4650	4188	.90	.94	.04
BANK SECTOR TOTALS										
			INDEX: 279.14	ICBG: -2.71	469	333705	1529751			
S 1.350	.900	ARABIAN SEAS INSUR.	46.7	0.00	3	1200	1020	.90	.85	-.05
S 4.390	2.100	PHILADELPHIA INSUR.	10.4	0.00	1	200	430	2.10	2.15	.05
INSURANCE SECTOR TOTALS										
			INDEX: 122.20	ICBG: -0.22	4	1400	3450			
2.240	1.620	JOR. ELECTRIC PWR.	10.0	5.37	2	2150	4406	2.04	2.05	.01
6.100	3.350	ARAB HOTEL	13.6	4.52	2	170	751	4.45	4.42	-.03
1.350	.970	BATL. PORTFOLIO	44.3	0.00	17	11400	12463	1.11	1.11	.00
.590	.330	JORDAN TRVL. TRAD.	9	0.00	13	15000	6230	.39	.41	.02
1.480	1.060	MID. EAST HOTELS	9	0.00	1	100	107	1.05	1.07	.01
4.600	2.890	ARAB INFL. INF. INDU.	9.9	2.00	7	17350	69398	4.00	4.00	.00
1.830	1.450	UNIFIED CO.	6.8	7.29	20	3000	4532	1.51	1.53	.02
SERVICE SECTOR TOTALS										
			INDEX: 112.17	ICBG: -1.58	52	49176	97986			
4.450	2.450	JOR. CEMENT FACT.	15.0	4.35	27	6963	17977	2.60	2.53	-.07
7.050	5.470	ARAB POTASH CO.	26.9	3.66	2	950	5197	5.47	5.47	.00
11.250	9.270	JOR. PETROL REFINERY	10.1	8.55	7	1223	13690	10.38	10.40	.02
6.100	4.500	JORDAN TANNING	8.0	8.00	1	100	500	5.22	5.00	-.22
1.470	1.040	WOOLLEN INDUSTRIES	11.2	7.09	350	494	1.36	1.41	.05	.05
2.070	1.100	INDUSTRIAL COM. AGR.	9	0.00	1	100	122	1.20	1.22	.02
7.350	5.800	JOR. MORTGAGE BILLS	8.3	3.25	2	250	1588	6.30	6.35	.05
S 5.740	3.620	ARAB PRDCT. MFG.	15.0	1.68	67	28170	15396	5.34	5.43	.09
S 7.100	1.760	JOR. CERAMIC IND.	8.1	5.41	1	350	643	1.85	1.85	.00
1.440	1.020	JOR. PAPER MANUFCT.	9.8	8.47	1	1000	1180	1.18	1.18	.00
6.350	4.650	ARAB ALUMINA IND. TRV.	6.9	8.12	1	250	1435	5.80	5.74	-.06
570	.400	LIVESTOCK & POULTRY	15.9	0.00	12	6685	3141	.47	.47	.00
1.110	.670	ARAB PAPER CONV. TRD.	22.0	0.00	1	100	900	.70	.72	.02
.620	.510	NATIONAL INDUS.	9	0.00	1	250	130	.52	.52	.00
760	.370	INTERMED. PETRO. CHEM.	9	0.00	15	26000	10920	.41	.42	.01
S 3.000	.920	MILL. CABLE WIRE. MFG.	27.2	0.00	19	15950	17938	1.13	1.13	.00
.730	.530	JOR. SULPHUR-CHEN	11.4	0.00	13	8750	5250	.60	.60	.00
INDUSTRIAL SECTOR TOTALS										
			INDEX: 104.06	ICBG: -0.23	278	231217	349773			
GRAND TOTAL										
			INDEX: 182.88	ICBG: -1.62	803	615492	1978960			
PARALLEL MARKET SEATTLE PRICE LIST FOR SATURDAY 16/05/1998										
N 1.050	.910	EXPORT & FIN. MKT. 75%	17.4	0.00	16	14750	10088	.92	.94	.02
.400	.300	CENTRAL GEN. STORAGE	9	0.00	3	1000	300	.31	.30	-.01
.530	.340	JOR. TRADE FAC.	9	0.00	44	374750	164733	.44	.46	.02
.800	.660	UNION TRV. 50%	9	0.00	15	106000	28600	.76	.77	.01
.620	.360	ARAB FIN. INVEST.	9	0.00	12	32600	13437	.42	.41	-.01
.290	.120	JOR. INDUS. MACH. JORDO	9	0.00	2	10000	1200	.13	.12	-.01
.600	.370	ARAB FOOD & MED.	9	0.00	6	4500	2130	.48	.47	-.01
.470	.240	ARAB ALUMINA IND. TRV.	40.3	0.00	10	23750	8083	.34	.35	.01
.500	.280	PAZL. TEXTILE	9	0.00	9	2000	672	.33	.35	.02
.650	.360	MILL. MOLT. IND. JORDO	9	0.00	81	243907	107300	.45	.43	-.02
S 1.230	.840	JORDAN TRV. 50%	9.7	0.00	2	1100	1252	.86	.90	.04
.690	.580	MID-EAST PETRO. 90%	9	0.00	3	2750	1403	.61	.61	.00
1.660	.860	UNION TOBACCO 87.5%	9.8	8.17	5	2538	2159	1.52	1.53	.01
.430	.240	ARAB ALUMINA IND. TRV.	40.3	0.00	10	23750	8083	.34	.35	.01
N .950	.550	ADVANCED PHARMACEUTICALS	9	0.00	2	500	315	.68	.68	.00
N .710	.430	PAZL. POTTERY	9	0.00	4	20051	10627	.53	.53	.00
N .950	.640	OPTIONAL TRV. 75%	9	0.00	13	13250	5175	.68	.65	-.03
N 1.310	1.000	KUTADAN	9	0.00	11	25550	27350	1.05	1.07	.02
N 1.000	.750	KERBAL PRINT CO. 75%	12.0	9.59	6	2700	1458	.80	.79	-.01
GRAND TOTAL										
			INDEX: 230	ICBG: 904815	392212					

REUTERS The Business of Information

Major Currencies & Cross Rates										
Currency	USD	DEM	GBP	CHF	JPY	CAD	ITL	NLG	FRF	
US Dollar	-	1.7958	0.5163	1.4882	134.50	1.4482	1764.80	2.0108	5.8978	
DE Mark	0.5589	-	0.3427	0.8275	74.84	0.8082	982.35	1.1197	3.3395	
GB Sterling	1.6225	2.9154	-	2.4114	218.50	2.3497	2983.06	3.2627	9.7314	
CH Franc	0.6729	1.2078	0.4139	-	90.83	0.9738	1198.53	135.21	4.0329	
JP Yen	0.0074	1.3337	0.4572	1.1038	-	1.0755	13.11	149.34	4.4544	
CA Dollar	0.6905	1.2918	0.4225	1.0565	1.108	-	1270.80	1.4551	4.3265	
IT Lira	0.0006	1.0772	0.3487	0.8642	1312.86	0.8203	-	11.39	3.3972	
NL Guilder	0.4873	89.28	0.3088	73.91	66.89	0.7200	577.30	-	2.9819	
FR Franc	0.1667	0.2894	0.1028	24.7780	22.42	0.2414	33.52	33.6200	-	

Middle Eastern Currencies										
Currency	USD	SAR	BAH	QAT	KUW	AED	LBP	EGP		
US Dollar	-	0.7090	3.7504	0.3770	3.6388	0.3058	3.6728	1613.20	3.4180	
Jordan Dinar	1.4104	-	5.2897	0.5317	5.1337	0.4313	5.1803	2134.27	4.8165	
Saudi Riyal	0.2866	0.1890	-	0.1005	0.97	0.0816	0.98	403.48	0.9106	
Bahraini Dinar	2.65	1.8807	9.9453	-	9.85	0.8112	9.74	4013.90	9.0586	
Qatar Dinar	0.2747	0.1948	1.0304	1.0304	-	0.0840	1.01	416.74	0.9382	
Kuwait Dinar	3.2701	2.3185	12.2642	1.2328	11.90	-	12.01	4948.33	0.9382	
Emirate Dinar	0.2723	0.1930	1.0211	1.0125	0.9910	0.0833	-	412.00	0.9298	
Lebanese/1000	0.68	0.4685	2.4788	0.2491	2.4084	0.2021	2.4272	-	2.2688	
Egyptian	0.2828	0.2076	1.0982	0.1104	1.0868	0.0895	1.0755	443.10	-	

Energy			Mid-East Currencies				
Currency	USD	DEM	GBP	CHF	JPY		
Brent	14.37	14.33					
W. Texas	14.47	14.11					
Bonny	14.37	14.33					
Dubai	13.18	12.77					
UL Gas	158.00	168.00					

Currency	USD	DEM	GBP	CHF	JPY
SA Riyal	0.2686	0.4780	0.16434	0.39654	38.9028
AE Dirham	0.2723	0.48909	0.16781	0.44932	38.6609
KW Dinari	3.2701	5.87844	2.01832	4.04881	440.335
BY Dinar	0.3770	4.76477	1.63478	3.94477	357.143
CY Pound	1.8888	3.3883	1.1915	2.2042	263.963



Spaniard Albert Costa celebrates winning his semi-final Italian Open match against compatriot Albert Berasategui. Costa won 6-3 4-6 6-3 to advance to the final and will play either Chilean Marcelo Rios or Brazilian Gustavo Kuerten (Reuters photo)

A year later, Kuerten still looking for follow-up win

ROME (AP) — Gustavo Kuerten hasn't won much since the French Open. Actually, he hasn't won anything.

The rangy Brazilian was a pleasant surprise at Roland Garros a year ago, coming from nowhere to grab the Grand Slam for his first, and so far only, career title.

He seems to have his clay court game back in high gear at the right time, moving steadily through the Italian Open to reach just his second semifinal of the season. "Every day I feel I'm playing better," the No. 8 seed said after beating Spain's Fernando Vicente 6-3, 6-4 at the Foro Italico Friday. "Sometimes I even managed to win some points I didn't think would go in. I played relaxed."

Kuerten faced his toughest test of the week Saturday, when he played No. 3

Marcelo Rios for a spot in the final. The day's first semifinal was an all-Spanish affair between No. 12 Alberto Berasategui and unseeded Albert Costa.

"I will be disappointed if I don't do well there," Kuerten said when asked if he feels pressure as his one chance to defend a title approaches. "but there will be other French Opens in the next few years, many more tournaments."

He became a star there last year, his personality as colorful as the bright yellow shirt, bandana and shoes he wore on center court Friday. Asked if the rain which delayed the start of his match with Vicente was bothersome, Kuerten smiled. "When it started to rain strong," he said, "I started to think about being in my bed

sleeping. I would have rather been there."

He was wide awake against his overmatched opponent, dictating the pace and never letting Vicente into the match.

Rios had his first difficult moment of the week in his quarterfinal with No. 11 Richard Krajicek. The Chilean saved two set points in the first set tiebreaker and won 7-6 (11-9), 6-3, repeatedly whipping passing shots by Krajicek.

Costa, who won last week's German Open, routed No. 15 Michael Chang 6-2, 6-1, and may be the hottest player on clay right now.

Costa has not dropped a set since the first round at Hamburg, when he saved two match points against Andrei Medvedev.

Berasategui, meanwhile, handled serve-and-volleyer Brett Steven 6-4, 6-2 Friday.

Coronado's Quest scratched from Preakness

BALTIMORE (AFP) — Coronado's Quest was scratched from Saturday's 123rd running of the Preakness Stakes Friday with a bruised hind foot and Kentucky Derby winner Real Quiet was tabbed as the new 2-1 favorite.

Trainer Shug McGaughey, who waited until Sunday to enter the rambunctious colt in the prestigious middle jewel of U.S. flat racing's Triple Crown, was en route to Baltimore to saddle a pair of horses this afternoon and could not immediately be reached for comment.

The Wood Memorial winner was training in Belmont Park in Elmont, New York, and McGaughey planned to van the colt to Pimlico in the early hours of Saturday morning for the Preakness.

Fearing his horse would act up at the crowded and circus-like atmosphere of Churchill Downs, McGaughey kept his horse out of the Kentucky Derby.

The quirky colt has a tendency of freezing in his tracks when being taken to a saddling area and it was thought that McGaughey was leaning towards the Met Mile at Belmont Park on May 25th, which now looms as a distinct possibility.

Coronado's Quest was scheduled to break from the fourth post. All of the horses scheduled to be on the outside of Coronado's Quest will now move one post closer to the rail.

That will move Real Quiet, who won the Kentucky Derby two weeks ago, from the outside 11th post to the 10th. It's a slight improvement, only one other horse has won the Preakness from the 10th — Greek Money in 1962.

Real Quiet, who has won 3-of-13 lifetime starts, has never posted back-to-back victories.

With the defection of Coronado's Quest, Real Quiet, ridden by Maryland-based Kent Desormeaux, was installed as the 2-1 morning-line favorite.

Derby runnerup Victory Gallop, ridden by Hall-of-Famer Gary Stevens, is now the 5-2 second choice on the morning line in the 1 3/16 mile race.

Arkansas Derby and Rebel Stakes winner Victory Gallop will break from the nine hole for Stevens, who picked up the mount in place of Alex Solis. Stevens guided Indian Charlie to a third-place finish in the Derby but was left without a mount when the colt was pulled from the Preakness.

Kournikova ousts Hingis

BERLIN (AFP) — Anna Kournikova stunned World No. 1 Martina Hingis 6-3, 7-6 (7/1) on Friday to advance to the semi-finals of the German Open.

It was the Russian youngster's first victory over Hingis in five meetings, and Hingis' fourth defeat this year after two losses to Venus Williams in Sydney and Key Biscayne and on to Lindsay Davenport in Tokyo.

The 16-year-old Russian will now face seventh-seeded Conchita Martinez after the Spaniard overcame 16th seed Ai Sugiyama of Japan 6-3, 6-3.

In the other semi-final, third seed Jana Novotna of the Czech Republic takes on French qualifier Amelie Mauresmo. Novotna rallied to beat eighth seeded Romanian Irina Spirlea 6-3, 5-7, 6-3, while Mauresmo overcame Barbara Paulus of Austria 6-4, 6-2.

Hingis was clearly tired after a recent campaign that has seen her win titles in both Hamburg and Rome. She was leathargic and made far more unforced errors than Kournikova, especially in overhitting the ball. Her serve was also vulnerable, and was often punished with a winning return.

In contrast, Kournikova looked eager and was very aggressive, and her double-handed backhand, hit both down the line and cross court, was especially impressive.

Whenever Hingis hit short,

Kournikova was quick to the net to volley a winner, and she was equally competent from the baseline, with the power of her strokes clearly unsettling Hingis.

Hingis gained the glimmer of a chance when Kournikova failed to convert three match points at 5-3, with two of the opportunities lost on nervous backhand errors.

Hingis also held two break points for 6-5, but Kournikova remained composed and weathered the storm, and then surrendered just one point in the tiebreak.

"You don't have every day match points against the No. 1 player," said 14th seed Kournikova, denying she thought she had lost her chance when the first ones slipped away.

"It was difficult for me to finish it, but I didn't lose my concentration so that was great. I was a little bit frustrated at 5-3, but I relaxed a little bit at 6-5, and although I lost the next game I was ready for the tiebreak."

Kournikova admitted to feeling intimidated in her previous battles with Hingis. Only one, at the Australian Open this year, was closely contested.

"It was difficult for me mentally playing against her because she has a lot more experience than I do, so I just tried to concentrate on my game and be aggressive and take control of the points early," said Kournikova.

Hingis made no excuses,

and clearly welcomed the opportunity to return home a few days early to begin her preparations for the French Open beginning in a little over a week from now.

"I gave her a lot of chances, but she had a lot of great shots and was for sure more aggressive than me," Hingis acknowledged. "I was always one step late because I was tired. Sometimes you win and sometimes you lose, and there is always something positive if you lose — I can go home tomorrow!"

"She played pretty well and served well and hit so many lucky shots and was so many times on the lines. Her backhand down the line was pretty good today. I knew she could play tennis, but she didn't really show it against me in the other matches. She was nervous all the time."

Hingis knew she had missed an opportunity to turn the match around at 5-3.

It would have been ideal to arrive at Roland Garros with another title under her belt, but Hingis was in no mood to mourn her early defeat.

"I won't cry because of that. It's just another tournament is over. I've had a great two weeks and pretty good matches at this tournament, and I will definitely be ready for the French Open," she declared.

Mauresmo, who was 5-1 and match point down in her final qualifying match, gained revenge for her defeat by Paulus at Amelia Island

last month, which the Austrian took 7-5 in the third, and claimed she had learned from that clash not to hurry.

"Today I took the time that I needed to beat her," said the 18 year old.

Since Mauresmo won the 1996 French Open and Wimbledon junior titles she has struggled to make her mark at the senior level. That, she explained, was because she had not expected the jump in standards between the junior and senior circuits.

"When I came out of the juniors I thought everything was going to be the same in the seniors," said Mauresmo, now ranked 65 in the world. "It took me time to realise that I had to work a lot harder than I was in the juniors if I wanted to be a top player. That took me a year, and step by step it was coming. I practise differently now — I push myself a lot more than I used to."

Novotna won a ragged victory over Spirlea to reach her fourth German Open semifinal. It was an uninspired and uninspiring match in which neither player took control. Martinez advanced by outstaying Sugiyama in a spirited baseline battle.

Monica Seles' father dies

CLEVELAND (AFP) — Karolj Seles, father and coach of United States tennis star Monica Seles, died at age 64 following a long illness, an agent for the former WTA Tour world number one said Friday.

Seles, of Hungarian origin but from the Yugoslav town of Ujvidek near the Hungarian border, died Thursday in Sarasota, Florida, after a five-year battle with cancer.

Seles, who had been suffering for some years from cancer, passed away with his

world-famous daughter at his side, said International Management Group spokesman Stephanie Tolleson from the agency's offices here.

Before looking after the career of his daughter, a multi-Grand Slam title winner, the elder Seles had worked as a cartoonist for local Hungarian language newspaper Ujvideki Magyar Szó.

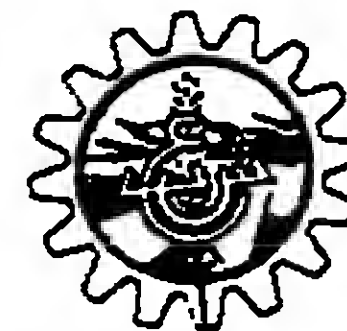
The family moved to the United States in the late 1980s as 24-year-old Monica's

career began to take off. She lost last week in Rome and returned home to be with her father for the past week.

Karolj Seles was diagnosed with prostate and stomach cancer in 1993 and last watched his daughter play in person last August in Atlanta. He is also survived by Ester, his wife of 35 years, and his son Zoltan.

Services will be private. The family is in seclusion.

The Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan



The Arab Potash Company Limited Invitation To Tender Contract No. APC/SP1/46/98 Salt Mushroom Dredging - SP1 2nd Stage

The Arab Potash Company Limited (APC) invites tenderers to tender for Dredging Works in Pan SP1 which forms part of the Solar System located at the southern end of the Dead Sea, Safi, Jordan. The scope of work to be carried out consists of dredging of Salt Mushroom, reefs and salt formations to a depth of 2.0m from the operation brine level of Pan SP1 with an approximate area of (30 km2). The dredged materials shall be used to construct salt dikes within the Pan SP1 by the contractor. It is expected that the contract period will be five years.

Interested Marine Dredging contractors having experience in similar works or hard materials dredging can tender to this contract, taking into consideration the following:

1. The Tender Documents can be purchased from the Procurement Department at APC's Head Office in Shmeisani, Amman, at a non-refundable fee of JD1,000 (One Thousand Jordanian Dinars) or its equivalent in a freely convertible currency for each set.
2. Tenders must be accompanied by a Tender Bond from a bank licensed in Jordan in the form of a Bank Guarantee in the value of JD300,000 (Three Hundred Thousand Jordanian Dinars), in accordance with the specimen contained in the Tender Documents. The Tender Bond shall be valid for 165 (One Hundred and Sixty Five) days from the closing date of the Tender submission.
3. A site visit will take place on Monday, June 08, 1998, tenderers' representatives shall gather at 0800 hours Jordan local time at APC's Head Office in Shmeisani, Amman.
4. The closing date for submission of Tender shall be 12:00 noon Jordan local time, Tuesday, June 30, 1998. The validity of Tender shall be 120 (One Hundred and Twenty) days from the closing date of the Tender submission. Tenders to be submitted to APC's Head Office in Shmeisani, Amman.

For any clarification you may contact APC's Projects Manager on the following Plant Site address:

	PLANT SITE-SAFI	HEAD OFFICE, AMMAN
P.O.-Box	: 1470, Amman 11118, Jordan	1470, Amman 11118, Jordan
Tel.	: 00962-3-377121/2/3	00962-8-5666165/6
Fax	: 00962-3-377130	00962-6-5674416

N. Al Sadoun
General Manager

Lawyers Required

BA Degree achieved with not less than very good and postgraduate studies from an English speaking country, and a fair knowledge of computer. To work as full time (in Amman) Salary will be upon qualifications. Applicants are required to send C.V. To
Fax: 4628525. No later than 25th May 1998

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Suharto faces growing demands to step down

JAKARTA (AFP) — Indonesian President Suharto on Saturday faced mounting calls to step down, with a Christian group and academics from a prestigious state university joining the growing chorus.

The executive board of the Indonesian Christian Participation, Parkindo, released a statement that "approves a resignation of Mr. Suharto as president of the Republic of Indonesia."

The statement, read out by Secretary-General Supardan, said it was made in response to "worrying incidents which we have gone through in these recent times."

Parkindo, which claims some three million members across Indonesia, said it was also "uniting itself" with struggles of the students and population to demand reforms.

"What we want is succession and reforms and the two cannot be separated," said Parkindo chairman, former parliamentarian Sabam Sirait.

Earlier Saturday a group of academics from Indonesia University (UI) led by Chancellor Budi Santoso, met with Mr. Suharto at his Cendana residence to tell him of people's aspirations, including calls for his resignation.

Mr. Santoso told journalists after the meeting that Suharto had said he would step down if the people no longer trusted him and demanded his resignation in a constitutional way.

"At any time, if it is felt by the people that he is no longer wanted, go ahead, but it should be through a constitutional way," Mr. Santoso said, quoting Mr. Suharto.

"He is a president not because he wants to but because it is based on a responsibility put on his shoulders by the legislature," he added.

Death toll climbs toward 400

JAKARTA (AFP) — The death toll from rioting, arson and protests this week in the Indonesian capital climbed towards 400 on Saturday as more charred remains were recovered from burnt shopping centres.

Rescuers found 113 charred bodies in the ruins of a three-storey shopping mall torched during rioting, according to latest police and Red Cross figures, as the grisly search for more bodies continued.

First Sergeant Suhardi of the district police station said the remains were found in the Ciledug Plaza which was among the shopping centres torched during a wave of rioting and looting on Thursday.

"We are not excluding the possibility of more bodies," he said. Ciledug Plaza is located in West Jakarta, where the worst violence occurred Thursday as mobs pillaged shops and burned homes. Nearly 200 people died in the residential and commercial area, including the 113 whose bodies were pulled from the mall.

The other major scene of mayhem was east

Jakarta, where more than 100 people died in the Yogya shopping mall. Sixty-five died in North Jakarta, three in the south and one in the city centre, latest figures showed.

Fifteen other people including six students and three soldiers died in street violence earlier in the week triggered by higher fuel prices.

In Ciledug, charred bodies were put into black plastic body bags which were immediately hauled into a waiting truck, which would leave once it was full to be replaced by another, an Agence France Presse photographer there said.

The fires had raged since Thursday and only parts of the gutted mall had been explored, said Dadang of the local district office.

"The fires are still burning in some parts of the building and we still have four units of fire engines working up to heavy rains began," he said.

He said hundreds of people, from the community and the local administration, as well as police and military were involved in the search.

Journalists and artists.

The Indonesian Association of Legal Aid and Human Rights, a leading human rights watchdog, Friday also joined the call for Mr. Suharto to resign.

"Because an Indonesian political system that guarantees human rights is only possible with a new, democratic government," the association said in an open letter sent to Agence France Presse.

Mr. Suharto cut short a visit to Egypt on Thursday as unrest broke out in Jakarta and in several other towns following the death of six students gunned down by security forces during a peaceful protest here Tuesday.

He has since vowed tough action against rioters and looters and ordered the review of a fuel price increase blamed for igniting the rioting.

The Jakarta Post said leaders of Kosgoro, a social organisation under the umbrella of the ruling Golkar party, have called upon Mr. Suharto and

Vice President Bacharuddin Jusuf Habibie to return the mandate given by the people.

Kosgoro leaders said the MPR should reconvene to act on calls for the president to step down.

The Post said 15 retired senior armed forces officers who fought alongside Mr. Suharto during the struggle for independence from Dutch rule 50 years ago also called for an MPR session to process resignation motions.

Mr. Suharto would Saturday he will reshuffle his two-month-old cabinet after House Speaker Harmoko, accompanied by his four deputies, met with him.

The cabinet line-up has been criticised by many for including incompetent figures and reflecting cronyism and nepotism.

Mr. Harmoko said the president had told him he will take every step in his power to safeguard the continuity of the nation.

Iraq's main refinery in urgent need of spare parts — official

BAGHDAD (AP) — Iraq's largest oil refinery is in urgent need of repairs to maintain production, which is already 40 per cent below capacity, an oil executive said in remarks published Saturday.

Iraq's Beiji refining complex, 210 kilometres north of Baghdad, was designed to churn out 480,000 barrels per day but is now able to produce only 290,000 barrels per day, said director general of oil refineries in northern Iraq Ali Hameed Saleh.

The plant is in urgent need of repairs and spare parts to maintain even that level of production, said Mr. Saleh.

The sprawling complex

was severely damaged in allied bombing raids during the 1991 Gulf war.

U.N. sanctions imposed after Iraq's 1990 invasion of Kuwait bar Baghdad from selling all but a limited amount of oil to buy food, medicine and other humanitarian goods.

Mr. Saleh said none of the proceeds from those oil sales has been allocated to upgrade Iraqi refineries.

"There is an acute shortage of spares and production and operation equipment," he said. His remarks were carried by the government newspaper Al Jumhuriya.

Iraq refines some 700,000 barrels of oil per day, Iraqi officials have said. In addition

to the Beiji refinery, there is another major refinery in the southern city of Basra and several smaller refineries across the country.

The U.N. Security Council agreed earlier this year that Iraq could boost exports under the oil-for-food deal from \$2 billion to \$5.2 billion when the current six-month phase of the oil deal expires on June 3.

U.N. oil experts have said Iraq needs \$300 million in spare parts to upgrade its oil industry in order to increase the exports.

The U.N. Security Council has not yet given Iraq permission to purchase the spare parts.

Demirel charges EU with seeking to divide Turkey

ANKARA (AFP) — Turkish President Suleyman Demirel has accused EU nations of seeking to divide Turkey by reviving a post-World War I treaty that had envisaged the creation of a Kurdish state.

"Most of our problems with the European Union (EU) stem from the fact that many in Europe would still want to revive the Tervat Treaty," Mr. Demirel was quoted as saying by the Istanbul-daily Yeni Yuzyl on Saturday.

Under the 1920 Tervat Treaty — signed between the victors of World War I and the predecessor of the Turkish Republic — a Kurdish state was to be set up in what is now southeastern Turkey.

The treaty also envisaged Greece controlling Turkey's Aegean coast and Istanbul under joint control of Western forces.

The Tervat agreement was replaced by the 1923 Lausanne Treaty — dictated by the Turkish nationalist leader Mustafa Kemal Ataturk.

"The Luxembourg summit decision [by the EU] to exclude Turkey from the EU is a political one," Mr. Demirel said, adding: "But despite this move Turkey is a European entity and will remain to be so."

"There are efforts for Turkey's division by creating a Kurdish state, but these efforts will fail," Mr. Demirel said.

At the Luxembourg summit in December, EU leaders rejected Turkey's appeal to be included in the bloc's enlargement plans in the foreseeable future, citing Ankara's poor human rights record, tensions with Greece and economic problems.

Angered by the move Turkey severed political dialogue with Brussels, saying EU membership was no longer its top priority. Mr. Demirel's remarks marked the first public statement by a Turkish leader linking Ankara's rejection by the EU to alleged European efforts to divide Turkey.



JUST FOR THE PRESS: British actor Hugh Grant kisses U.S. actress Jeanne Tripplehorn on the lips as they pose for the press in Cannes Saturday. Both are in Cannes to promote their up-coming movie "Mickey Blue Eyes" during the 51st International Film Festival (AP photo)

G-8 backs U.S. in Mideast peace bid

BIRMINGHAM (AFP) — The G8 countries said Friday they were "deeply concerned" with the stalemate in the Middle East peace process and strongly supported U.S. efforts to break the deadlock.

"We are deeply concerned at the continuing stalemate in the peace process with concluded agreements not yet being implemented," the Group of Eight countries said in a joint communiqué.

They said that the United States had presented "a package of constructive and realistic ideas" includ-

ing a second Israeli redeployment and urged all parties to agree on them.

"We welcome Palestinian agreement in principle to these ideas, which if accepted by all sides, would lead to the resumption of the final status talks," the G8 said.

"We call on Israeli and Palestinian leaders to refrain from unilateral acts which pre-determine the final status negotiations and undermine confidence," they added.

The G8 — Britain, Canada, France, Japan, Italy, Russia, Germany,

and the United States — said they were determined to work with all sides in the Middle East peace process, mentioning Israel, the Palestinians, Syria and Lebanon.

"A resumption of Israeli-Palestinian negotiations would build confidence in the region and help to restore momentum to the peace process as a whole," the communiqué said.

The Palestinian peace process has been effectively stalled for over a year after new Israeli house constructions were allowed to go up in east Jerusalem.

Human rights groups: death toll is four in Gaza, one in W. Bank

OCCUPIED JERUSALEM (AP) — Two Palestinian human rights groups said Saturday that four Palestinians were killed in Israeli-Palestinian clashes earlier this week in the Gaza Strip, and not eight as claimed by the Palestinian National Authority (PNA).

The Israeli army said Saturday that the casualty figures had been inflated intentionally by the PNA to provide a reason for more violence. However, one human rights researcher said the higher death toll was a result of the initial confusion and not intentional.

The two groups, the Palestinian Human Rights Monitoring Group and the Palestinian Centre for Human Rights, said they conducted their own surveys and found evidence only of four deaths. The only death in the West Bank was never in dispute.

Thursday's fighting between Israeli troops and Palestinian protesters in the West Bank and Gaza was the worst in 20 months. By the afternoon of that day, Major-General Abdul Ra-zzaq Majadeh, head of public security in the Gaza Strip, announced that eight Palestinians had been killed in Gaza. Maj. Gen. Majadeh did not provide a breakdown of names, ages and home-

towns at the time.

Later in the day, the director general of the Palestinian health ministry, Imad Tarawiyah told a news conference that the bodies of four Palestinians had been brought to hospitals and that "we have heard of four other dead."

Mr. Tarawiyah then read out eight names.

The number of deaths is a highly sensitive issue because both sides were accusing one another of bearing responsibility for them.

Israel said Palestinian officials incited the violence: Palestinians accused Israeli troops of excessive force in quelling the government-organised demonstrations.

Lt. Col. Sharon Grinker, an Israeli army spokesman, said the PNA inflated the numbers of those killed and injured "with the purpose of inciting further anger."

Raji Sourani of the Palestinian Centre for Human Rights and Bassem Eid of the Palestinian Human Rights Monitoring Group said they sent field-workers to hospitals and the families of those reported dead. Both surveys found that four people had been killed.

A separate survey by The Associated Press (AP) also found evidence of only four deaths. The clan leader of one of the other

four allegedly killed said no one had died in his extended family, and an AP reporter met one of the other alleged victims alive in a hospital.

The dead are: Ashraf Arram, 22, of Rafah; Samir Fayyad, 35, of the village of Qarara; Zamil Wahidi, 52, of the Jebaliya refugee camps; and Mohammad Jneid, 22, of Jabaliya. The fifth man killed was Ismail Shehadeh, 24, of the Kalandia refugee camp in the West Bank.

Mr. Sourani also said a total of 71 Palestinians were injured in Gaza, but did not provide a breakdown of how many were hit by live rounds and rubber bullets. Mr. Sourani said 25 were in serious and three in critical condition.

Mr. Tarawiyah had given two different figures for injured in his news conference — 114 and 120, respectively. Mr. Tarawiyah did not return repeated telephone calls from AP on Saturday, which is a working day for the ministry. The health ministry scheduled a news conference for Sunday to discuss Thursday's events.

Mr. Sourani said his investigation showed that Israeli troops had used excessive force and that in many instances, they opened fire when their lives were not in danger.

Tenacity wins top interview award

LONDON (AFP) — BBC journalist who asked a senior cabinet minister the same question 14 times — and still failed to get a straight answer — has been given a top award. The Royal Television Society presented Jeremy Paxman with an award for interview of the year. Paxman, who is renowned for his tenacity and front, was questioning former home secretary Michael Howard last year in a row over the running of a prison on the Isle of Wight. He asked Howard if he had stepped in over prison chief Derek Lewis whose service is directly responsible for running jails. "Did you threaten to overrule Derek Lewis?" Paxman asked, repeatedly going back to "did you, yes or no?" every time Howard avoided a direct answer.

France grants asylum to Algerian transsexual

PARIS — France granted political asylum to an Algerian transsexual on the grounds that the individual risked persecution from both sides in Algeria's bloody civil strife. The government board which gave political refugee status said the transsexual was in danger in Algeria from Islamists seeking to overthrow the government.

Eels to demonstrate spirit of Northern Ireland peace deal

DUBLIN — An Eel farm split in half by the Irish border is set to become the island's first cross-border commercial fishing project, demonstrating the spirit of Northern Ireland's peace deal. North-South cooperation on a coordinated programme of development for the eel industry will generate some \$28 million annually for the whole island, Marine Minister Michael Woods said in a statement. The eel area straddles the border near Ireland's western border and is equally split between Northern Ireland and the Irish Republic. "We can only develop this if we do it together," a department official said. "Eels know no borders."

Singing duo gets Hollywood star

LOS ANGELES (AP) — Sonny and Cher's hit "I Got You Babe" made them stars more than 30 years ago. They finally have concrete proof. "I couldn't be happier today if I were twins. It's so cool," Cher said Friday as she unveiled the couple's star on the Hollywood Walk of Fame. "I too think it's long overdue, but it's perfect timing." It was a posthumous honour for Bono, the entertainer-turned-politician who died Jan. 5 when he skied into a tree at a South Lake Tahoe resort.

Susan Lucci falls short at Emmys for 18th time

NEW YORK — Soap opera star Susan Lucci lost out again at television's daytime Emmy Awards, failing for the 18th time to win the lead actress honour. Lucci, who has played the self-obsessed Erica Kane on ABC's all my children for 28 years, stood her best chance in years of capturing an Emmy at the 25th annual awards ceremony at radio city music hall, according to some critics. Although critics said Lucci added depth and maturity to her character, the Emmy went to Cynthia Watros, who portrays Annie Dutton on CBS's guiding light. All my children won the award for outstanding drama.

Iran launches military

TEHRAN (AP) — Iran on Sunday launched its new military equipment and test new military equipment in the southern port of Chaharmahal and Kohgiluyeh. The 500 air force personnel also launched missiles using real targets against a hypothetical enemy. The games codenamed "Majnoon" and "F" fighter bombers were launched against a hypothetical enemy. Two games that have been launched during the games. Gen. ...

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